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Working Paper in Infant Development

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Overview

In this essay I will attempt to understand key features in the psychodynamic development of children from the time of their entrance into the extrauterine environment until they reach approximately 24 months of age. I will use The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant (Mahler et al., 1975) both as a source of empirical data and for its presentation of a developmental system of stages and substages preceding and comprising what the authors term the separation-individuation process. From this point, using Talcott Parsons' theory of actions systems as a basis, I will attempt to explain in a fashion perhaps more rigorous than that of Mahler, et al., the activity of children as the necessary conditions of development through the phases and subphases of the separation-individuation process are met. First I will outline the Parsonian theory, generally used in sociological analysis, and then discuss the separation-individuation process and its precursors.

I. Systems Theory

Parsons presents us with a model describing the four necessary functional subsystems of any action system. Influenced by cybernetic function models, the subsystems are laid out with those containing the most information and exerting the most control over the functions of other subsystems presented first (Parsons, 1965:30,37-38). As a first step it will be helpful to rummage through some of the theoretical baggage which make up the pattern-maintenance, integration, goal-attainment, and adaptation functions. Parsons is trying to understand very complex phenomena such as the elements of social life by

envisioning them as interdependent and constitutive of an empirically and theoretically distinct system (e.g. a society). Systems, also known as structures, are defined as "a set of interdependent phenomena [which] shows sufficiently definite patterning and stability over time" (underlining mine, from Parsons, 1965:36). Structures, relevant to their environing systems, tend to show ~~long~~-range patterns. Functional subsystems are one of three important axes on which such systems may be analyzed. Function is the theoretical tool which allows us to understand how a structure maintains patterns in the midst of the differently patterned tendencies of its environment. (Parsons 1965:38)

The use of the term 'action system' signifies the assumption that actors, themselves concrete systems and a fundamental unit of analysis, have goals and act with reference to symbolic systems. Though developed to understand social systems, we will use the functional model of action systems to understand personality systems. The theory must then be reviewed on a very abstract level; it will hopefully become clearer as it is utilized later in the essay.

The pattern maintenance function operates at the structural level through values. Binding normative imperatives at a high level of generality (what one ought to believe, what one must not do) are articulated institutionally and internalized in personalities producing motivational commitment. "(V)alues define the direction of orientation that is desirable for the system as a whole." (Parsons, 1965:44) Pattern maintenance establishes the stability, indeed the identity of a system; when high level normative patterns change, the structure of the system itself changes or undergoes dissolution. The pattern maintenance function provides firm ground from which we can detect and explore

changes in other parts of the system. (Parsons 1965:39-40) However, "(p)roperly conceived and used, it does not imply the empirical predominance of stability over change." (Parsons, 1975:39)

Yet action systems, except in the limiting case, are differentiated into subsystems of disparate structures and functions. The multiform particularity of diverse collectivities, roles, habits, and actions 'contained' in these subsystems must be integrated if needs are to be fulfilled and the system continue. This is done by way of norms which are specific to a certain functional subsystem or institution, yet are legitimated through the evocation of the institutionalized values of the pattern maintenance system. Norms specify procedures universally applicable to a particular set or type of interactions. The integrative function integrates these norms in a comprehensible and legitimate manner. "(N)orms facilitate internal adjustments compatible with the stability of the value system or its orderly change, as well as with the adaptation to the shifting demands of the external situation." (Parsons 1965:40) At the societal level, of a highly differentiated society, the integrative function may be specified to the judicial system. "Legal norms at this level, rather than that of a supreme constitution, govern the allocation of rights and obligations, of facilities and rewards, between different units of the complex system." (Parsons, 1965:40-41)

All action systems function within environments, interchange with which is both necessary and variable (Parsons, 1965:36). The goal-attainment function serves to promote equilibrium in the system by matching system needs with available facilities in environing systems. Although, any complex system is likely to have a hierarchy of goals

ordered according to desirability, goals are desired things: they are defined particularly. (Parsons, 1965:39)

The adaptive function provides facilities for goal-attainment, whatever goal is sought. "(A)t the macroscopic social-system level, the function of goal-attainment is the focus of the political organization of societies, while that of adaptation is the focus of economic organization." (Parsons 1965:40)

Having presented a schematized version of the functional subsystem theory, it is both useful and necessary to review more concrete elements of Parsons' theoretical system. Though norms and values have universal application in spheres where they apply, roles and collectivities are defined particularly and concretely (Parsons 1965:43). The normatively regulated complex of behavior of an actor in interaction with concrete role partners is a role. If the actions of two or more role partners form a theoretically and empirically distinct unit, 'normatively regulated by common values and norms,' we have a particular kind of system, a collectivity. (Parsons 1965:42)

II. Introduction to Child Development

Mahler et al. are concerned with the psychological birth of the human infant. They seek to explain the normal "child's achievement of separate functioning in the presence of, and with the emotional availability of the mother," (Mahler, et al. 1975:3(1) that is, the human capacity for autonomous and, eventually, independent functioning. Our study then concerns the formation of separate, individual identity on the one hand and firm relations to the emotional and actual world on the other. With the exception of pathological cases, this is a universal process. Mahler, et al. believe that though psychological birth is a life-long process, its groundwork is layed, after a developmentally normal symbiotic phase, in the separation-individuation phase which lasts from approximately "the fourth or fifth to the thirtieth or thirty-sixth month" (Mahler, et al. 1975:3).(2) Separation and individuation are related but distinct developments. Separation concerns the infant's emergence from symbiotic fusion with the primary love object, individuation concerns the assumption of stable individual characteristics. (Mahler, et al. 1975:3-4)

At this point I will review the various phases which precede and the subphases which constitute the separation-individuation process. These are (and ages are approximate): autism (0-2 months of age), symbiosis (2-5), differentiation (5-9), practicing (9-14), rapprochement (15-24), and the development of object constancy (24 months through the third year of life).

Phenomena of the normal autistic phase, comprising approximately the first month of extrauterine life, are essentially physiological. The

major task of this phase is the achievement of homeostatic equilibrium through primarily physiological mechanisms and there is relatively little cathexis of the surrounding environment. (Mahler, et al. 1975:41 and 290) The infant in symbiosis behaves as though s/he and the parent were not different entities. "The essential feature ... [of this subphase] is hallucinatory or delusional somatopsychic omnipotent fusion with the representation of the mother and, in particular, the delusion of a common boundary between two physically separate individuals." (Mahler, et al. 1975:45) Interaction in this subphase yields psychological energy embedded in patterns of wishes for gratification whose effect is always present in the human being. The differentiation subphase begins during the latter half of symbiosis and lasts until about nine months of age. Both subphases are constituted by the infant's gradual shift from inner-oriented states to a cathexis of and interest in the parent and the outside world. In differentiation the infant acts to physically separate itself, if slightly, from the parent (Mahler, et al. 1975:46)

The practicing subphase is marked by the development of walking and the toddler's exuberance in exploring the other than parent world. Energy is invested in expanding ego functions. In the rapprochement subphase the infant takes an interest in sharing its activities with his or her parent. The subphase is beset by extreme ambivalence and a psychological crisis precipitated by contradiction in the child's images of itself and its parent(s). Language develops during this period as does, at the end of the subphase, the attainment of individual characteristics.(2.5)

III. The Autistic Phase

In this phase, sleeplike states predominate over states of arousal

with the infant generally waking in response to somatic tensions such as hunger (Mahler et al., 1975:41). "The normal autistic phase serves postnatal consolidation of extrauterine physiological growth." (Mahler et al., 1975:48) Mahler et al. note their belief that this phase is marked by hallucinatory wish fulfillment (Mahler et al., 1975:41); by comparing this phase to symbiosis I will argue against such a position. There are two stages of autism, the first described above and the second essentially characterized by phenomena which mark the transition to symbiosis. It is interaction with the parent which allows the infant to begin to cathect external phenomena in this time period. Gradually reflexes disappear as the infant begins to turn its head towards the breast and follow the parent visually. This type of learned action coincides with the phases of alert inactivity, both of which mark the transition to the symbiotic subphase.

IV. The Phase of Separation-Individuation

The First Subphase, Symbiosis

At about the second or third month, eye-to-eye contact with a vertically moving human face may elicit 'the unspecific, "social," smiling response.' Such a response signifies the onset of symbiosis (Mahler et al., 1975:45-46) In the phases preceding and in the subphases constituting separation-individuation, the parent serves as a tension reducing agency for the child. When physiological tensions which evoke such responses as urinating, defecating, and coughing (Mahler et al., 1975:43) become too intense, the infant's cries tend to evoke the parenting figure's presence and ministrations. During this period the infant experiences both tension ascension and reduction. We are hypothesizing that the infant associates tension reduction with the

presence and ministrations of the parenting figure. Further, the infant's smile is a symbol of its expectation of tension reducing activities. The infant's smile also serves to signify to the parent, among other things, the effectiveness of his/her caretaking.

During this time period physiologically organized habitual behaviors (reflexes) begin to dissappear. In place of reflexes, the infant acts to re-experience percepts with the same (that is, similiar) 'perceptual identities' as previous tension-reducing activities such as sucking at the breast. (Mahler et al., 1975 citing Freud on 42-43) This phenomena signifies that within the appropriate developing agencies of the infant, rudimentary goals are being formulated (3). Taking the infant's formulation of goals as given, its association of the parent with "good," tension reducing experience, is necessary. If the child does not turn towards the parent, expecting and responding to his/her caretaking, then either the infant will die or its reception of less than adequate care will open the way to psychopathology.

Two types of tension-reduction in particular may be identified as particularly important both in the infant's entrance to and development through the symbiotic stage:

(C)ontact perceptual experiences of the total body, especially deep sensitivity of the toal body surface (the pressure that the holding mother excercises) ... play an important role in symbiosis.... [And] (w)e found that all other conditions being equal, symbiosis was optimal when the mother naturally permitted the young infant to face her--that is permitted and promoted eye contact, especially while nursing (or bottle-feeding) the infant, or talking and singing to him.reference??

Parental caretaking like that described briefly above allows for "the shift of predominantly proprioceptive-enteroceptive cathexis towards sensoriperceptive cathexis of the periphery." A major step in

symbiotic development occurs when the infant is able to turn its attention outward from within the boundaries of its body to cathect gratification which comes from interaction with the parent. Obviously such caretaking, in which pressure on the infant's body and mutual gazing are important components, is a necessary condition of the infant's ability to formulate and attain goals.

It is my hypothesis that the infant's association of the parent with good, tension reducing, experience and its preliminary formulation of goals on this basis are some of the necessary conditions for the infant's creation of a delusional symbiotic unity based on hallucinatory wish-fulfillment. In keeping with the logic both of evolutionary necessity and of an undifferentiated, relatively unexperienced psyche, it is hypothesized that experiences are remembered in terms of increases and decreases in tension. Though the infant's experience becomes increasingly more textured, good and bad are not associated. Concordant with the infant's formulations of goals, the parent must provide constant and adequate gratification. With the final condition of adequate caretaking met, the subphase which we identify as symbiosis begins. (Of course these conditions are actually attained gradually and the symbiotic subphase emerges from the autistic phase.)

In symbiosis, the parent is perceived as fulfilling all wishes, as all good. I would hypothesize that having little experiential basis, the infant has little sense of time. Goals for the infant can be described as intrapsychic percepts of gratificatory experience, action in pursuit of which is expected to gratify again. In symbiosis, the goal of gratification knows no bounds; it is elevated to an absolute status in which the parent symbolizes bliss. Thus the goal becomes a wish for

absolute, unending gratification. Moreover, the infant cannot differentiate its own still primarily automatic attempts at tension reduction (e.g. coughing, sneezing, and spitting) from the gratification gained through his parent's ministrations.' (Mahler et al., 1975:43) Hence, the infant, to the extent that it wishes, is fulfilled magically. Not having enough experience with which to differentiate itself, the infant feels its unity with its parent to be omnipotent. Symbiosis "describes that state of undifferentiation, of fusion with mother, in which the 'I' is not yet differentiated from the 'not-I' and in which inside and outside are only gradually coming to be sensed as different." (Mahler et al., 1975:44)

At this point in our discussion, the more formal introduction of Parsonian theory will be helpful in explicating the logic of symbiosis. Analysis of two distinct structures, comprised of interdependent, patterned, and relatively stable phenomena will be helpful. These are the structure of interaction between parent and infant and the structure of the infant's psyche. We shall be concerned with the former only insofar as such concern is necessary to illuminate the latter.

The term symbiosis, though not used in the biological sense, is not a misnomer. It refers not to a dual unity between individuals of different species but more generally to a collectivity between actors at qualitatively different levels of development. In symbiosis the parent functions as an auxiliary ego, the infant's dependence on him or her being absolute. The conscious and unconscious satisfaction of interaction with the infant (in normal cases) as structured by the adoption of the parenting role are necessary conditions for parental caretaking, and hence the infant's progression through symbiosis. If the

pattern wherein infant communicates need and is gratified by the parent is too drastically disrupted, if one actor ceases to play his/her role, the infant will not adequately progress through symbiosis. That is, if the parent does not minister to the shifting needs of the infant closely enough, if necessary types of interaction do not take place, not only might the infant die from biological causes (e.g. hunger causing system breakdown), but the infant's personality may cease to function.

I believe that with the growth of action on the infant's part in symbiosis we can speak of a psychological structure. We know that the infant acts in, for example, smiling at the parent and turning its head towards the breast or bottle. What is the function or functions which allow such patterns to maintain stability in the midst of more random patterns in its environment? I believe that we can identify binding normative imperatives in the infant's symbiotic delusion which produce motivation. In speaking of the infant's experience of symbiosis we speak not yet of what ought to be, but of the type of pleasure which must be experienced if the symbiotic structure of interaction is to continue. The infant's actions on the level of goals are patterned by such imperatives. I would define the value structure of the infant's personality in this subphase as a feeling of omnipotence, a feeling of absolute gratification, further defined as a feeling of fusion. This is "the direction of orientation that is desirable for the system as a whole (Parsons, cited above)."

We can argue that the symbiotic infant's personality has structural features although Mahler, et al. state quite explicitly that symbiosis occurs before "the emergence of the rudimentary ego as a functional structure." (Mahler, et al. 1975:48) The infant cannot, at this

stage, utilize means to attain ends either in a motoric or a cognitive manner except in the most limited sense, neither can it delay gratification. Nevertheless, the infant's wishes for a all-embracing gratification, and if the infant did not do so, its personality could not sustain itself; that is severe psychopathology would develop (cf. Mahler, et al. 1975:6-7 and 10 for the infant's failure in this regard). If there is a psychological pattern maintenance function operating during this period, we would expect that the infant would reject, in a quasi-normative sense, those experiences which could not be, those experiences which violated its values. This hypothesis is confirmed in Mahler, et al.'s statement that: "Any unpleasurable perception, external or internal, is projected beyond the common boundary of the symbiotic milieu interieur (cf. Freud's concept of the 'purified pleasure ego,' 1915b), which includes the mothering partner's gestalt during ministrations." (1975:44)

By referring to the early developments of body image so important in symbiosis we can concretize our understanding of the pattern maintenance subsystem of the infant's personality. "(W)e believe the mothering partner's 'holding behavior,' her 'primary maternal preoccupation' in Winnicott's sense (1958), is the symbiotic organizer--the midwife of individuation, of psychological birth." (Mahler, et al. 1975:46-7) It is through interacting with the parent, the stability of gratification that they provide, that the infant can shift cathexis to its own body and, through experience, develop 'body-self' boundaries. (This also allows the infant to shift cathexis to the parent, "the principal psychological achievement of this [sub]phase" [Mahler, et al. 1975:48]). The gradual development of body image plays a part in the infant's

experience and expectation of unconditional gratification in symbiosis. Consequently, there is libidinization and defense of the body image: we find "the deflection--by defense formations such as progression--of destructive, unneutralized aggressive energy, beyond the body-self boundaries (cf. Hoffer, 1950b)." The pattern maintenance function includes "protective systems [which] safeguard the infant's body from the oral-sadistic pressures which begin to constitute a potential threat to his body integrity from the fourth month on (Hoffer, 1950a)." (Winnicott 1958, quoted in Mahler, et al. 1975:47)

Yet although we hypothesize that this value structure is universal in symbiosis, no less important is the nascent movement towards individual autonomy among the infants. Mahler, et al. emphasize the mutual cueing of parent and infant: the infant communicates its needs, the parent signals his/her readiness or lack of readiness to respond to those needs, the infant adopts behavior which produces signals that the parent will minister to its needs. The type of interaction which develops is dependent to no small extent on the infant's innate endowment, its sensitivity and propensity towards certain moods, as well as the parent's fully developed personality. Through cueing we see the development of individualized behaviors which are directed by system values. This is obvious in the case of Junie:

Junie would stiffly maintain a standing position on mother's lap, and mother would clap Junie's hands as if she were already at the pat-a-cake stage.... This pattern of standing Junie erect, of which her mother was inordinately proud, became, of course, greatly libidinized and preferred by the young infant. (Mahler, et al. 1975:50)

Junie comes to favor standing and playing in her mother's lap because of the pleasurable interaction it produces with her mother. Different

infants, then, engage in different activities, with different immediate goals, in response to the same system imperatives.

Although adequate symbiosis and the value system associated with it are necessary to each child, the symbiotic experience varies tremendously from barely adequate to optimal (5). Roadblocks in the cueing of parent and infant or objective difficulties to the caretaking experience may make the infant more trepidatious in seeking out the parent and in signaling its need.

I would now like to raise two arguments against positions taken in The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant both of which hinge on the distinctiveness of symbiosis. Mahler, et al. write of the autistic phase: "Physiological rather than psychological processes are dominant, and the function of this period is best seen in physiological terms." (Mahler, et al. 1975:41) Yet they also speak of hallucinatory wish fulfillment. Though the regularity of tension-reduction and satisfaction in the autistic phase is necessary, and though in seeking to reexperience perceptual identity the infant can be said to pursue goals, autism is an objectless phase (Mahler, et al. 1975:48). If the infant can pursue only particular goals and not seek to attain a class of experience, then the infant does not yet wish. Only when the infant's actions are guided by values which exclude the experience of particular sensations can we speak of wishes which maintain system identity. Without this feature, though we have the precursors to a psychological system, I would conceptualize the infant as an essentially physiological entity being satisfied physiologically. Only when the infant's goals become essential to its 'being,' are 'defended' can we say that psychologically the infant is 'creating' a sphere of omnipotence. Before the unspecific, social

smile and the projection of unpleasurable experiences beyond the symbiotic orbit, we have no evidence to suggest that the infant has wishes which may be fulfilled.⁴ Symbiosis, then, is the first psychological structure; in its blissful gratification, it is "the primal soil from which all subsequent human relationships form." (Mahler, et al. 1975:48)

If we argue textually, it seems probable that it is precisely the importance of symbiosis which convinced Mahler, et al. to conceive of it as a phase of its own. Why would one argue, these authors might ask, that a stage which is preobjectal (Mahler, et al. 1975:48) should be included in the process whereby a child creates his/her own identity separated from the mother and individually distinct? The answer lies in the fact that symbiosis contains the roots of the ability to relate. Only with a pattern-maintenance subsystem containing feelings of omnipotent unity are we able to venture into the object world. Essential values of the personality are codified in symbiosis and it is for this reason that it should be included as the first subphase of the separation-individuation process.

The Second Subphase,
"Differentiation and the Development of Body Image"

Differentiation begins at the peak of symbiosis so that the two subphases overlap. At about this time, four or five months of age, the unspecific, social smile becomes "the specific (preferential) smiling response to the mother, which is the crucial sign that a specific bond between the infant and his mother has been established" (Bowlby, 1958). (Mahler, et al. 1975:52)

Mahler et al. outline this subphase theoretically by postulating that when:

safe anchorage within the symbiotic orbit (which is mainly enteroceptive-propioceptive and contact perceptual) continues and pleasure in the maturationally increasing outer sensory perception (vision or looking, and possibly hearing or outward listening) stimulates outward-directed attention cathexis [wishful expectation], these two forms of attention cathexis can oscillate freely." (Mahler, et al. 1975:53)

Although in essential agreement with this statement, I would like to restate it in terms which begin to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for explaining the infant's actions.

Mahler, et al. describe behavior typical of this subphase, saying: "We can watch the infant molding to the mother's body and distancing from it with his trunk; we can watch him feel his own and the mother's body; we can watch him handle transitional objects." (Mahler, et al. 1975:53) I postulate two important conditions, aside from an adequate symbiotic experience, which lead to the infant's differentiating behavior. One is the physiological development of a store of motor energy which tends towards discharge; that is, the entrance into the psychological system of a given capacity from the environing biological system.(6) The other is

a growing store of memories of rather diffuse needs which were not satisfied by the parent; the infant remembers, however, that the states of ill-defined tension were relieved by some of its own actions.⁷ Such memories allow the infant to formulate goals and to act to achieve satisfaction autonomously. Mahler, et al. seem to be pointing to both these factors when they speak of pleasure in maturationally increasing functions. Newly matured sensory modalities contain some sort of physiological need to be flexed and the infant reduces particular tensions (thus deriving pleasure) in so utilizing them.

We noted before that entrance into this subphase is dependent on an adequate symbiotic experience. From the infant's perspective, we can then identify both its molding and its distancing as actions it takes to maintain the symbiotic delusion of omnipotent fulfillment. Yet at the same time, as such activities serve as a means for the infant to fulfill its own needs, in doing so the infant begins to move "beyond the symbiotic orbit." (Mahler, et al. 1975:53)

During this subphase "changing states of tension and relaxation 'would seem ... to form a kind of central core of dim body awareness'" (Greenacre, 1960) (Mahler, et al. 1975:52). This dim awareness, provides the foundation upon which the hatching process takes place. Mahler, et al. write of hatching:

(W)e came to recognize at some point during the differentiation subphase a certain new look of alertness, persistence and goal-directedness.... The child no longer seems to drift in and out of alertness, but has a more permanently alert sensorium whenever he is awake."
(Mahler, et al. 1975:54)

Mahler et al. are correct to emphasize that the "'hatching process' is ... a gradual ontogenetic evolution of the sensorium--the perceptual-conscious system." But we must remember that this

physiological transformation of (input into) the system will only result in hatching if the necessary preconditions of adequate symbiosis and the exploration through action of other-than-symbiotic spheres is already taking place.

Meanwhile, differentiation progresses:

At about 6 months, tentative experimentation at separation-individuation begins. This can be observed in such behavior on the part of the infant as pulling at mother's hair, ears, or nose, putting food into the mother's mouth, and straining his body away from mother in order to have a better look at her, to scan her and the environment. This is in contrast to simply molding into mother when held.... (It is during the ... [second] subphase of separation-individuation that all normal infants take their first tentative steps toward breaking away, in a bodily sense, from their hitherto completely passive lap-babyhood--the stage of dual unity with the mother. All infants like to venture and stay just a bit of a distance away from the enveloping arms of the mother; as soon as they are motorically able to, they like to slide down from mother's lap, but they tend to remain or to crawl back and play as close as possible to mother's feet. (Mahler, et al. 1975:54-55)

From this information, we can identify an important dynamic of the differentiation subphase and the second half of symbiosis. With the higher order desire of maximizing gratification, the infant comes to act with the goal of physically separating itself from the parent. The infant, in a radical departure from the more complete symbiotic dependence, chooses to maintain its distance from the parent. Universally, as a first step in separation, the infant acts for itself so as to satisfy itself. Action precedes understanding, yet eventually the value structure of symbiosis begins, at the least, to change towards an acceptance of the separation and difference from the parent. The infant still expects omnipotent fulfillment of its wishes, but no longer expects unity.

However, in order to understand changes in the pattern-maintenance

system, we must explore the variability of the infant's experience and the discrepancies within that experience. Only by understanding how the infant continues to function by integrating its various experience can we understand change in the pattern-maintenance system. We must begin, then, with the infant's experiences.

Although we originally stressed the infant's association of the parent and his/her ministrations with tension reduction, in reality there is ample opportunity for the parent to be associated with experiences of tension ascension. (Mahler, et al. 1975:54) The association of the parent with bad experiences of tension-ascension, is also implicit in Mahler, et al.'s statement that during differentiation the infant is able to 'confidently expect' (1975:54) that unpleasurable experiences will be relieved by the parent. Both the infant's confident expectation of the parent's ministrations and the, at least, preliminary formation of a mental representation of the parent associated with tension ascension have their basis in experience. And both indicate that the pattern-maintenance system of the infant's on the way to becoming more integrated and stable has integrated a degree of implicit separation.

If there were no inkling of the actual separation between the infant and the parent in the infant's mind, then the infant would experience a state of tension relieved by the parent as being totally random. But having accommodated its ideals of omnipotent gratification with an increasing awareness of separation the child is able to experience the parent acting so as to satisfy it after a period of discomfort. Uncomfortable sensations are, then, no longer immediately mentally excluded from the symbiotic orbit. Rather the image of the symbiotic parent is kept intact and differentiated into a parent who can be

expected to act to relieve the infant. Thus an increasing awareness of time, the awareness of the possible co-existence of states of tension ascension and of a parent whose contact provides for all wishes serves as an integrating mechanism. The expectation of a future merger with the parent, serves to legitimate experiences of increased tension for increasing periods of time. The infant's expectations that the parent will soon take care of it, insofar as they influence the infant's (often communicative) actions, become goals. The infant then, fueled by images of omnipotent gratification, acts to satisfy itself either directly through differentiating behavior or through signalling its needs to the parent. Values and goals are separated on the psychological level; in fact there is a nascent contradiction between the two. The human infant wishes for absolute gratification, but in acting on that basis, begins to move out of the symbiotic sphere.

The need for integrating contradiction is particularly clear in the infant's association of the parent with increases in tension. The infant must come to terms with the less-than-perfect caretaking of the parent. The parent's caretaking is sometimes almost perfectly attuned to the infant's needs, but much more often it is not. The parent may be associated with sudden increases in tension (because of his/her role in diapering, for example) or with a more subtle increases in tension arising from a lack of awareness of the infant's needs. Yet if this image of the bad parent is too quickly associated with the good, all-satisfying parent, the child will have no central internal images with which to motivate itself. Hence, during this subphase we have at least the tentative formation of an image of a bad-parent who does not satisfy, a bad parent whose caretaking of the lack of it is to be

avoided. The splitting of the parental image serves an integrating function.

At this stage the reader may note that in speaking of psychological systems, it is difficult if not impossible to precisely differentiate the pattern-maintenance and integrative functions. Integrative functions are continually used to attain intrapsychic gratification in a relatively random and differently patterned environment. If used often enough, they may become a necessary part of psychic action, used to provide everyday experiences and actions with gratificatory energy. (Unconscious) images of gratification, legitimate, provide the necessity for, psychic functions such as splitting; through this process, the integrative function itself becomes a necessary part of the system. An example is our classification of the primitive symbiotic defense of "projecting" unpleasurable impulses beyond the orbit as a pattern-maintenance function. Though this phenomena serves as "proof" of a nascent value structure the ease with which it might be categorized as an integrative function enlightens us to the lack of differentiation between structures at that early age. This is particularly true in that this defense is eventually superseded by more differentiated processes. Yet though we may redefine projection of the unpleasurable as an integrative function in symbiosis, the more differentiated activities which take its place may come to provide pattern maintenance functions for the system. It is clear, for example, that an awareness of time and the ability to engage in substitutive activity in accordance with system values while awaiting the parent or some other more "purely" pleasurable object or activity may become integral to the personality system.

Before discussing differentiation further, we must step back and review the "individually different inclinations and patterns" which have developed amongst the infants (Mahler, et al. 1975:55). These authors say that:

From about 7 to 8 months we have found the visual pattern of 'checking back to mother'--at least in our setting--to be the most important fairly regular sign of beginning somatopsychic differentiation.... The baby begins comparative scanning.... He starts to discriminate between mother and he or she or i_t_ that looks, feels, moves differently from, or similarly to, mother.

I believe that what we see here are patterns of cognitive discrimination serving as an integrative function. The infant's propensity towards the human face is quasi-instinctual (Mahler, et al. 1975:45-46) Given this investment in the human face as an object and signal of oncoming gratification or tension, the infant must differentiate those features of the world which signify the beloved object from those which do not. This cognitive exploration is a reflection of the infant's psychic value structure. To maintain the image of the good parent as all-powerful and all giving, the parent must be differentiated from similiar objects. Yet at the same time, checking back is a reflection of the infant's precarious position now that it has even a minimal awareness of its separation from the parent.

If checking back visually to the parent is an integrative function, then the infant's reaction to "strangers," human beings who are strange relative to the parent, is a direct reflection of the infant's value structure. During this subphase the degree of the infant's basic trust in the gratificatory potential of the

parent manifests itself quite markedly. Mahler, et al. say:

In children for whom the symbiotic phase has been optimal and in whom "confident expectation" has prevailed (Benedek, 1938), curiosity and wonderment, discernible in our setup through the checking back pattern, are the predominant elements of their inspection of strangers.... [For example,] (w)e saw Linda soberly and thoughtfully examine without fear, both visually and tactilely, the faces of participant observers who were fairly unfamiliar to her. (Mahler, et al. 1975:57-58 and 56)

This is in contrast to Peter, Linda's brother who is also being described at 7 and 8 months of age:

Following ... a lapse of 1 or 2 minutes perhaps, during which he reacted to the "stranger's" cautious and mild overtures, and during which his w_o_n_d_e_r_m_e_n_t and c_u_r_i_o_s_i_t_y were also quite definitely discernible, Peter's apprehension of the stranger seemed to overwhelm him. Even though he stood near his mother, on the same wicker chair on which she sat, and could lean on mother's body if he wanted to, he burst into tears while looking at the stranger, precisely at the moment when mother began to stroke his head.

The lesson is clear. The stronger the pattern-maintenance system, the more energy it is possible to devote to confident expectation of pleasurable interaction, the more effective and resilient is the integrative, comparing function. When the value structure is weak and overlaid by trepidation, the infant fears the stranger. The stranger represents visually that which is feared in the parent. The infant perceives the parent's movements and signals, which seem to signify tension reducing caretaking; the stranger, too, appears like the parent. Yet when the infant acts towards the stranger as if s/he were the parent to relieve itself of tension in interaction, the infant often remains unsatisfied. The infant is fearful of signals of gratification which are too often

associated with pain. Defensive structures integrate unpleasurable experiences which have become associated with wishes of fulfillment and the infant becomes fearful in some interactions with the parent. We might term a situation where basic trust is at a minimum an instance of the deflation of values. This is the fearful infant's position in relation to the stranger: the infant is motivated by system values of interacting with and being satisfied by that which resembles the parent; yet the infant fears those interactions with something different than the all-good parent which produce nothing but pain. This is in striking contrast to the trusting child who can integrate the stranger's appearance and explore it.

The Third Subphase, Practicing

This subphase lasts from approximately nine to sixteen months (Mahler, et al. 1975:71 and 291). It may be divided into two periods, the first covering the period when the baby uses activities like crawling and paddling to move away from the parent; the second concerning 'the practicing period proper, characterized by free, upright locomotion.' (Mahler, et al. 1975:65) During this period, the toddler invests much energy in autonomous functioning and reality testing. Mahler, et al. say "the central feature of this subphase [is] ... the elated investment in the exercise of the autonomous functions, especially motility, to the near exclusion of apparent interest in the mother at times." (1975:69) Practicing is a time of elation and activity.

It is also a subphase of separation. The infant's activities "serve the purpose (1) of establishing familiarity with a wider segment of the world and (2) of perceiving, recognizing, and

enjoying mother from a greater distance." (Mahler, et al. 1975:67) The infant is already aware of its separation from the parent and during this subphase acts increasingly within and to maintain that distance. There is an increased awareness of physical space and distance modalities for communicating (assurance and need) to the parent become important for a period of time in early practicing. The capacity for the infant to bear its experiences of separation and tension by the reassurances communicated in the parent's signals of concern is integrative and will become increasingly important to the young toddler.

A fascinating phenomenon which provides insight into the general logic of practicing is that of "emotional refueling":

We saw 7- to 10-month-olds crawling or rapidly paddling to the mother, righting themselves on her leg, touching her in other ways, or just leaning against her.... It is easy to observe how the wilting and fatigued infant "perks up" in the shortest time following such contact; then he quickly goes on with his explorations and once again becomes absorbed in his pleasure in functioning. (Mahler, et al. 1975:69)

Without complicated analysis, it is clear that though invested in their own relatively autonomous functioning, the infant needs the parent, and what is gained from the parent is once again utilized in the surrounding physical environment.

From the age of 10 or 12 months ... with the spurt in autonomous functions, such as cognition, but "especially upright locomotion" the world becomes "the junior toddler's oyster." (Mahler, et al. 1975:71,70 and 71) "(T)he child seems intoxicated with his own faculties and with the greatness of his own world." The child accepts substitute adults (other than parent) easily and

is relatively impervious to the frustrations which accompany activity in its widely expanding sphere. This sudden transformation of the child is best understood as the quick influx of adaptive capacities into the system. Suddenly the child is able to do things it "could not do before. What the infant 'chooses' to attain with these capabilities (goal attainment) is substantively different from the means which are at its disposal. Though it is necessary that the capability for walking be used for walking, toddlers differ at this age in regard to the types of activities they become engaged in. Action in the realm of swiftly developing ego functions will have complex ramifications on the child's psyche.

Mahler, et al. note that the toddler can find narcissistic solace in its own expanding ego functioning when threatened by object loss, a fear which recurs, though variably, during each developmental subphase (Mahler, et al. 1975:71). Such an argument can be made most strongly for the practicing subphase, but I believe that even here a deeper dynamic is playing itself out. In practicing, system values, the belief in the omnipotent power of the parent to provide gratification, hold true--and Mahler, et al. do not take account of this adequately. The toddler's actions and goals can be separated into two rough categories. Some actions, related to interaction with the parent(s), can be seen as direct reflections of system values; yet others, related to expanding ego capacities and functioning in the other than parent world, have a dynamic all their own and are simply regulated by such values. The energy the infant uses to invest in its developing capacities springs from the motivational structures of the symbiotic orbit.

The practicing subphase is marked by a rapid influx of energy into the adaptational and goal-attainment systems. However, without support for the older interactional values structure, the toddler will not be able to achieve practicing goals. Only by stressing the rôle of the pattern-maintenance system can we understand the evocation of motivation when the infant returns to the parent and 'perks up' after emotional refueling.

In this subphase the toddler appears to be essentially motivated by its physical activity, but though this is very important, ultimately all motivation springs from interaction with the parent. Upon this emotional basis, the infant begins to do new things in the cognitive and physical spheres. The infant's activities are marked by triumph; s/he achieves his/her goals. With the images of gratification which bear the capacity to act in such a manner being to some degree unconscious, the infant invests itself wholly in activities in which it achieves its goals and in which strain at the level of values or norms is not too great. This seems to be the essential meaning of narcissism.

We must take care, however, that we do not understand this subphase in too simplistic a fashion; the infant's new activities have an effect upon the processes of integration and adumbrate structural change on the level of values in the next subphase. To comprehend how the emerging capacities of the toddler complicate and texture the fears and hopes associated with interaction with the parent, it is well to look at the characteristic game wherein the toddler constantly runs off until s/he is swooped up by the parent (Mahler, et al. 1975:66). There is evidence to suggest that some

of the elation associated with practicing may stem from the toddler's capacity to escape from the parent who has been less than optimally satisfying in the confines of a symbiotic relationship. For example, for those children "who had an intense but uncomfortable symbiotic relationship" practicing was very beneficial (Mahler, et al. 1975:71). In running off to be swept up, the toddler utilizes its capability to be independent of the vagaries of the parent's signals of and actual caretaking. The infant integrates this desire to be without, to be away from, the parent with his/her need to interact with to be comforted by the caretaker. Mahler, et al. say that this behavior turns "from passive to active the fear of being reengulfed by mother." (1975:71) The child integrates experiences in which its goals of interaction with the parent are not met by engaging in an activity which produces the parent's embrace; at the same time, darting away is an expression of the child's need to be without the parent who cannot be depended on to satisfy.

Such activity underscores the importance of walking to this subphase.8 Mahler, et al. say: "We found in boys and girls alike that in the very next month following the attainment of active free locomotion, great strides were made towards asserting their individuality" (1975:72). I believe that this illustrates the central issues of autonomy and the beginnings of identity formation. The child, though acting from and ultimately for the gratification of symbiotic fusion, creates a separate world of capability and activity for itself. From this phenomenon springs the incredible diversity, both individual and cultural, which we, human beings

The Second Subphase,
"Differentiation and the Development of Body Image"

Differentiation begins at the peak of symbiosis so that the two subphases overlap. At about this time, four or five months of age, the unspecific, social smile becomes "the specific (preferential) smiling response to the mother, w_h_i_c_h_ i_s_ t_h_e_ c_r_u_c_i_a_l_ s_i_g_n_ t_h_a_t_ a_ s_p_e_c_i_f_i_c_ b_o_n_d_ between the infant, and his mother has been established" (Bowlby, 1958). (Mahler, et al. 1975:52)

Mahler et al. outline this subphase theoretically by postulating that when:

safe anchorage within the symbiotic orbit (which is mainly enteroceptive-propioceptive and contact perceptual) continues and pleasure in the maturationally increasing outer sensory perception (vision or looking, and possibly hearing or outward listening) stimulates outward-directed attention cathexis [wishful expectation], these two forms of attention cathexis can oscillate freely." (Mahler, et al. 1975:53)

Although in essential agreement with this statement, I would like to restate it in terms which begin to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for explaining the infant's actions.

Mahler, et al. describe behavior typical of this subphase, saying: "We can watch the infant molding to the mother's body and distancing from it with his trunk; we can watch him feel his own and the mother's body; we can watch him handle transitional objects." (Mahler, et al. 1975:53) I postulate two important conditions, aside from an adequate symbiotic experience, which lead to the infant's differentiating behavior. One is the physiological development of a store of motor energy which tends towards discharge; that is, the entrance into the psychological system of a given capacity from the environing biological system(6) The other is

manifest. The child then has interests other than the parent, a space of its own; this vantage point will become quite significant in the infant's dealings with the parent.

The central feature that Mahler and her cohorts observed in the parent's attitude towards the child in the practicing subphase is the parents' use of the word "child" for his/her toddler. Giving up the child's body, the special, close, symbiotic relationship is "quasi-automatic" and made up for by an investment in the maturity of the offspring. Once separated, there was concern that the child be able to "make it" out there in the world (1975:73). That is, the parent introduces long-term expectations (perhaps values) of success and short-term goals of competence into the relationship with the child.(9) The onset of walking signifies such competence to the parent and a reciprocal message of confidence and gratification is communicated to the child. (Mahler, et al. 1975:74). The child's reward for walking is in the most general instance a communication of the parent's pleasure, of the parent's lack of tension. The child's reward is essentially symbolic.

The general mood of the subphase is transformed, however, when the infant becomes low-keyed. This occurred "only when ... [the toddlers] became aware that mother was absent from the room." (Mahler, et al. 1975:74) It is marked by:

two recurrent phenomena: (1) if a person other than mother actively tried to comfort the child, he lost his emotional balance and burst into tears; and (2) the child's "toned-down" state visibly terminated at the time of his reunion with the briefly absent mother, although sometimes not before a short crying spell. (Mahler, et al. 1975:74-75)

It is the infant's emotional reaction to certain separations from the parent which confirms our analysis of the psychodynamics of

practicing. The practicing toddler is dependent on the intrapsychic delusion of the omnipotence of the parent. At times, in order to maintain a state of motivation and goal formulation, the infant's value structure must be reaffirmed through interaction with the parent. I would hypothesize, and Mahler, et al. are not clear on this, that though separation from the parent is a necessary condition of this state of need, strain on the level of goals, when the infant's immediate objectives are out of reach, is also a precipitating factor.

Mahler, et al. say of children during such periods, "their gestural and performance motility slowed down, their interest in their surroundings diminished, and they appeared to be preoccupied with inwardly concentrated attention." (1975:74) Just as we can observe that goal-attainment is temporarily hindered in states wherein the system maintains itself, so too there is less energy for integrative functions. The stranger, representing the ambivalence and uncertainty of the relation to the loved object, cannot then be tolerated. Similarly, the infant's reaction to the parent signifies a need for integration. Mahler, et al. hypothesize a split between the bad parent of separation and the good parent. This can be understood in terms of the toddler's capacity to function independently of the parent while intrapsychically dependent on wishes of gratification from him or her. From such a position we hypothesize that the child is at least partially occupied with an image of the bad parent who is gone, who does not satisfy. This state would seem to co-exist with the "ego-filtered affect of longing," (Mahler, et al. 1975:75) both the lack of expectation of

the bad parent and longing for the good parent function to integrate the infant's experience into the pattern-maintenance system. But the tension between them is manifested when the actual parent returns. When the parent appears, the infant, imbued with the expectation of caretaking can signal its distress and release tension in (efficacious) crying. At the same time, the toddler's crying signifies its dissatisfaction with the bad parent who does not interact or who interacts badly. Often the child does not immediately interact with the parent and cathect goals when their attainment is dependent on a caretaking parent who has been absent. The toddler in his/her reaction begins to integrate the bad parent with the good parent (Mahler, et al. 1975:67). It takes the parent's presence over time to re-evolve the images of the good-parent.

In previous passages we have followed Mahler, et al. in emphasizing that the separation and individuation processes, though intertwined, are distinct. 'The intrapsychic developmental task of separation ... [consists in] differentiation, distancing, boundary formation, and disengagement from mother.' Individuation concerns, 'the evolution of intrapsychic autonomy, perception, memory, cognition, [and] reality testing.' I understand this process as 'beginning' with the infant's capacity to individuate itself in forming goals through its efforts to maintain homeostasis in the milieu of interaction with the parent. In becoming an actor, the infant, up until this stage in the separation-individuation process, attains a degree of physical separateness in providing for its own needs. In the practicing subphase, then, separation and

individuation are out of sync. The infant is quite separated, but individuation lags behind. Though operating in the other than parent world, the infant does not conceive of him/herself as a separate individual, or of the parent as less than omnipotent. Thus the stage is set.

In the next subphase the need to integrate the good and bad components of the parent, the need for an internal image of self adequate to the infant's tasks, individuation, all come to a head. There is a need for rapprochement.

The Fourth Subphase, Rapprochement

In rapprochement, which lasts from about 15 to 24 months (Mahler, et al. 1975:291), we see the 'beginnings of representational intelligence which will culminate in speech and symbolic play.' The child utilizes his/her capacity to act in separation from the parent, but is at the same time more concerned with being with the parent and sharing with the parent than in the previous subphase. There is a shift from an orientation with the physical to the social world.

These phenomena have their basis in the central psychodynamic of the subphase. The child, with an increased awareness of his/her own separation experiences strain at the level of goals towards the beginning of this subphase. Both failed goal-attainment and zonal tensions which cannot be relieved must be integrated with a belief in the omnipotence of the parent. From this crisis stems the child's individuation, his/her attainment of separate, individual identity. The sentences of this paragraph, then, can be correlated with the differentiation into a beginning, crisis, and resolution of the

rapprochement subphase.

Strain on the level of norms in the child produce demands on the parent which the parent cannot meet (differential input needs and output capabilities in relation to an environing structure). This precipitates a change in the psychological value structure, crisis in the child. With the resolution of this crisis (optimally) in the attainment of a positively cathected self and (parental) object representations, the child has increased capacity for autonomous action. We find differentiation both on the psychological and social levels. On the one hand, emotional expression becomes extremely differentiated. In, a corollary fashion, the child's social relations expand to other significant objects. Gender identity develops and it becomes more efficacious to differentiate children according to their individual patterns of activity, mood, interest, rather than by subphase. That is, we see the beginning of individual identity and the differentiation of individuals.

Beginning Rapprochement: At about 15 months the child starts to share his/her interests with the parent. The toddler brings objects to the parent and expects him/her to be interested in them, to pay attention to the child and his/her activities. "(T)he toddler indicated to mother by words, sounds, or gestures that he wished her to be interested in his 'findings' and to participate with him in enjoying them." (Mahler, et al. 1975:90) At times the parent responds with interest and admiration in the child but sometimes the child's overtures are refused and the parent will neither interact nor signal that they will begin or continue any sort of pleasurable interaction. Perhaps in response, attention also shifts to the other

than parent social world:

(C)hildren now showed a greater desire to h_a_v_e_ or d_o_ what another child had or did....They wanted the toys or the cup of juice and cookie that were handed to the other child. Along with this important development there appeared specific goal-directed anger ... if the desired aim definitely could not be attained." (Mahler, et al. 1975:90-9)

Moreover, children become possessive about their bodies. "No longer did he [the child] like it to be 'handled'.... He did not even seem to like to be hugged and kissed, unless he was ready for it." (Mahler, et al. 1975:91) How can this set of behaviors be explained?

The child's focus on social interaction and on physical activities and things as (and to the degree that) they can be used in pursuit of physical things is entirely different from the activity of the last subphase. The child has both painful and pleasurable experiences in the outside world, yet now s/he is aware of his or her separateness. It is those experiences in which the child is unable to attain its goals, to master, those experiences in which the child is hurt which provide the impetus for integrating that which is painful with what the child believes is the parent who possesses the emotional, the sensual power to right all wrongs. The child has become increasingly aware, and his/her cognitive capacity no doubt plays a role in this as well as other achievements, that the parent is a person "out there in the world" possessing his/her own interests and desires (Mahler, et al. 1975:90). The child attempts to integrate his/her experiences of tension ascension, separateness, and pain with the internal representation of the good parent through sharing his or her own interests. The child uses its capabilities for action in the physical world as facilities through which to attain the parent's

attention and interaction.

At least three purposes are served in sharing interests. First, the child may attempt to relieve immediate tensions and recent, painful memories through this attempt to interact with the parent. On a more abstract and symbolic level, the child attempts to give pleasure to the parent in sharing those things which give it pleasure; the child attempts to open up a world of interaction in which it will be satisfied. This also serves a defensive purpose. The child avoids being rejected by the parent by providing objects which may be rejected instead. And, finally, the child attempts to integrate its painful experiences of the physical world with its separation from the parent. Implicit in the child's action is the question of whether the parent can erase the pain symbolically contained in objects of the physical world which are separate from the parent? Yet even in the child's social to reattain the pleasure of the symbiotic status quo lies a contradiction. For the child, aware of his or her separateness is aware of his/her personal failures, is aware that symbiosis is no more.

But we must explain not only the child's sharing of interests, but his/her acquisitiveness, aggression, and negativism as well. In some sense the activities of another child may appear to be "intrinsically" interesting for a child, but such appearance must be contexted. We are interested in the pattern-maintenance and integrative functions which provide meaning for and are the foundation of such goals. In a more developed analysis of mind, one might conceive of cognitive functions as an interdependent subsystem, containing, along with the psyche or personality, four functional

subsystems. One could then analyze the inputs and outputs between them, recognizing the primacy of each in certain spheres of activity. But in this essay, we are primarily concerned with the psychodynamic motivations. It would seem that what another child has or does is desired because it is associated with and may become an implicit means to pleasurable interaction with parent (and increasingly with peers) which dispels tension and signifies acceptance. Essentially, the child wants because it desires to be wanted.

I would also like to argue that both the anger and negativism of the child are in some sense displacements of hostility and rejection from the hatred of the bad parent. The rejection of passivity signifies a rejection of the parent who is associated with tension ascension. Both the parent's lack of interest a_n_d_ his/her capacity to interrupt the child when the child is engaging in a pleasurable, tension-reducing activity are rejected. The capacity for such activities is dependent on the child's capability of utilizing means towards ends both to decrease its internal level of tension and to engender pleasurable interaction with the parent. Significantly, these events take place "in the midst of the anal phase." (Mahler, et al. 1975:91) The child's capacity to pleasure themselves through defecation and retention, his/her independent production and ability to act pleasurably act against the wishes of the parent, both provide a medium for and may be a precipitating cause in the child's needs to act autonomously and negativistically.¹⁰ From this position, the child rejects the parent who at times disturbs them. That is, they desire the absence of the parent and/or their tension heightening machinations. Aggression, at least at this level of development,

mean only that it is more efficacious for the subject to desire the absence of a tension producing object (through whatever means are compatible with other criteria of the psychological structure) than to do otherwise. not only the parent who is not present, but the parent who chooses to ignore the child

Goal-directed anger, of course, implies the wish that an object (in this case another person) relinquish its autonomy in the face of the goal or goals of the angry. It implies an increase in tension, relatively uncontrolled and directed outwards, implicit within the anger the need to destroy, or perhaps alter, that which causes tension. Though another child may often function as the object of aggression, the source of such directed hatred can only be the relationship to the bad parent. The child, of course, without integration, conceives of the parent of tension ascension as all-bad. It wishes that the source of this tension would be no more. Here, with strain on the level of goals, the child diverts such aggressive energy from the parent whose bifurcate images s/he is trying to integrate to a more acceptable object.

I believe that the psychological dynamics we have discussed are helpful in explaining other phenomena of the early stages of practicing. Specifically, pleasure attained in sharing interests with the parent, and the growing dissatisfaction with and ambivalence towards the parent can explain the child's veering away from the parent and low-keyed restlessness when the parent is not present, the related use of the word 'hi' and stranger anxiety. Concentrating as we are on conflict, it is important not to downplay the pleasure the child experiences in its nascent social interactions. There is, on

the one hand, increased capability for autonomous goal-attainment with the use of words like "cookie." But, more generally, with the 'discovery that one could call and find mother and others,' the excited exclamations "Look, Mommy" and "hi!" became common among the children observed by Mahler, et al. (1975:94). Similar to this, but in sharp contrast, is the child's increased restlessness and activity brought on by mother's absence. Mahler, et al. hypothesize that with the realization of separateness, sadness, longing for a partially internalized object from a depressed state, takes the place of low-keyedness. But for some reason, during this period of the subphase, the child is unable to muster the ego strength for sadness: "hyperactivity or restlessness might thus be seen here as an early defensive activity against awareness of the painful affect of sadness." (1975:92) In a low-keyed state we can hypothesize a relatively simple relationship between a need for re-evocation of values which would lead motivation in pursuit of goals. Here, the phenomena are more complicated. I hypothesize that longing for the good-parent cannot perform an integrative function for the expectation of timeless, sensual care is in jeopardy. The defensive increase in activity nevertheless puts in stark relief the increasing differentiation of the infant's psyche. The infant, in some sense, chooses to invest what energy it has; no longer does a zero-sum model of tension increase and reduction directly dependent on the presence or image of the tension reducing primary object do justice to the human phenomena.

If the infant's reaction to the parent's absence is complex, the analysis of his/her reaction to strangers is even more so. It bears

out on an interpersonal level the ambivalent approach-distancing activity of the child, veering towards the parent and then returning to his or her own concerns:

(T)here was often a self-conscious turning away from the stranger, as if the stranger at this point constituted a threat to the already toppling delusion or illusion of exclusive union with mother. There seemed to be a threat involved in the very fact that certain people other than mother [often but not always the father in these examples] began to become genuinely important in the child's life (loyalty conflict). (Mahler, et al. 1975:92-93)

I would argue that the child's confusion of its wishes and those of the parent, projection, illuminate the child's growing fear of abandonment. It is not so much uncertainty as to the stranger's response which causes the child to turn away, but rather uncertainty as to the mother's reactions. I believe an image of the bad parent, who the child wishes gone hangs over his or her head. By turning to a relative stranger for comfort, the infant, wishing the ambivalence implicit in the relationship with the primary caretaker null, fears that the parent will cease to exist or will reciprocate with a wish for the destruction of the infant.

The Rapprochement Crisis: The crisis period consists in an alteration of the child's psychological value structure and of manifestations of strain (often temper tantrums) in the relationship with the parent. The period begins at about 19 months when:

our toddlers seemed quite eager to exercise their rapidly growing autonomy to the hilt. Increasingly, they chose not to be reminded that at times they could not manage on their own. Conflicts ensued that seemed to hinge upon the desire to be separate, grand, and omnipotent, on the one hand and to have mother magically fulfill their wishes, without their having to recognize

that help was actually going from the outside, on the other. In more cases than not, the prevalent mood changed to that of general dissatisfaction, insatiability, a proneness to rapid swings of mood and to temper tantrums.... Typical behavior ... was, for example, pulling mother's hand and using it as a tool to get a desired object or expecting that mother, summoned by some magical gesture alone, rather than with words, would guess and fulfill the toddler's momentary wish. (Mahler, et al. 1975:95)

Why?

The toddler of this and the preceding subphase is separate from the sensuous, tension-reducing, special contact with the parent. Often failing at goal-attainment, cognitively more aware of his or her smallness in a large world, the toddler attempts to engage in tension-relieving interaction with the parent, yet is often frustrated. The toddler does not have adequate confidence in his/her ability to command, instantaneously, the attention of the parent. In connection with age-old patterns, the toddler must be confident in the availability of the good parent so that s/he may "cathect his self-representation with neutralized energy." (Mahler, 1968b) Yet awareness on the child's part that s/he is imploring the parent, trying to get the parent to respond produces value strain. After all, on the most basic level, the child believes itself to be, if not the parent, omnipotent in interaction with him/her. The child's awareness of his/her own need and autonomous actions to secure the parent's omnipotent caretaking spark the beginnings of a cognitive revelation: If the parent does not help, being a separate, yet omnipotent person in an outside world, then perhaps the parent does not wish to help. The infant's projection of autonomous action and will-formation onto the parent lend an appalling cast to the image of the bad parent. The infant originally protects his/her feeling of the good parent by formulating a distinct image of the bad, but now the parent wishes them pain, and at the same time, if stability is to be maintained, the images must be integrated. Crisis is born. The child wishes for the caretaking, the interaction of the parent, but fears that s/he will be shut from his or her source of light forever.

by the desires of the other.

The child wishes to know that they can recreate through their own actions a unity of unconditional goal-attainment. Yet they cannot recognize that help comes from the parent, for this implies that it might not. The child attempts to subordinate the parent to his/her desires. Either the parent is to appear magically or, alternately, the child will control the parent as s/he might a tool. To the degree that the child is able to do without and/or to hate the parent, it is logical to expect to find the child hoarding his/her autonomy and denying the parent. The crisis in system values the need for the parent but the fear of rejection by a parent who chooses to deny the child set the stage for the ambivalencies of this period, e.g. "the rapidly alternating desire to push mother away and to cling to her." (Mahler, et al. 1975:95) To an increasing degree this is internalized in the ambivalence manifesting in many of the phenomena we are describing. There is a yearning for the "symbiotic status quo," a state not accessible to such desire. Thus, with the crisis in system values, "the prevalent mood changed to that of general dissatisfaction, insatiability, a proneness to rapid swings of mood and to temper tantrums." (Mahler, et al., cited above)

But the crisis must be understood within the larger familial (or at last dyadic) context. We have been speaking, up to this point, foreboding though it may sound, of the travails of the normal child with an optimally available parent (by Mahler, et al.'s culturally specific standards):

If the mother is "quietly available" with a ready supply of object libido, if she shares the toddling adventurer's exploits, playfully reciprocates, and thus facilitates his salutary

attempts at imitation and i_d_e_n_t_i_f_i_c_a_t_i_o_n_, then internalization of the relationship between mother and toddler is able to progress. (Mahler, et al. 1975:79)

That is, it is most beneficial if the parent is able to understand and even urge the child's autonomy, at the same time tolerating the child's ambivalence in the interpersonal sphere. But, of course, to the parent the child's needs and pains appear contradictory:

(W)hile he is now not as dependent and helpless as he was only a half a year before, and seems eager to become less and less so, nevertheless he even more insistently indicates that he expects the mother to share every aspect of his life. (Mahler, et al. 1975:78)

The parent's overwhelming focus on either the dependence or independence of the child, reflecting both socialization into the parental role and his/her own psychological needs, yield less than optimal expectations of the child. The parent may be unwilling to accept the child's demandingness or wish to hang onto the toddler, an inability to accept separation (Mahler, et al. 1975:78). Such reactions to the child produce heightened ambivalence. Prototypically, and many other patterns may prevail, "the less emotionally available the mother is at the time of rapprochement, the more insistently and even desperately does the toddler attempt to woo her." (Mahler, et al. 1975:80) This may lead to a situation in which the child does not have optimal available energy for goal-attainment and ego development nor for the integration of interpersonal experience and the construction of a resilient value structure. We must understand, however, that no parent can be more than optimally available for the child. The parent cannot "resolve" the child's conflicts. At this point, only psychosis (system breakdown) can restore the myth of omnipotent fusion.

During the rapprochement subphase, the child must construct, on the pattern-maintenance level, a positively cathected image of self differentiated from a similar image of the parent. This revised value structure must provide motivation for and "legitimize procedures," different types of interpersonal intercourse as well as making acceptable the child's cognitive understanding of his/her small and separate place in the world. Although I cannot specify how, through conflict, such changes in the pattern-maintenance function are instituted, I can make a few suggestions.

At this point in our analysis one of the salient aspects of value

contradiction in the child revolves around the fear of the bad parent who wishes pain upon the child. This fear is not ontological. The prevalence of an image of such a parent causes distress because on such a basis, the child cannot expect aid or cathect the parent positively. The child can only wish for the destruction of the parent causing strain on the level of (positive) values. Which leads us to examine new sources of positive cathexis. The child's pattern-maintenance structure contains an image of the tension reducing parent and this provides energy for integrative functions in which the child gains pleasure in acting (semi-)autonomously. Mahler, et al. write that 'dramatic fights' with the parent are common and negativism an integral part of the rapprochement subphase. Perhaps through pitting him/herself against the parent, the child comes to realize that the parent is not omnipotent. Certainly the hate and aggression the child expresses towards the parent, indirectly but also through dramatic fights, allow the child to, over time, understand that wishes for destruction do not end in the destruction of the object or of the self, do not end in tension increase without surcease. If indeed the child comes to understand on a cognitive level that the parent is not omnipotent, then a source of value strain is reduced. The parent is no longer directly responsible for the pain the child feels acting autonomously nor the tension of zonal (particularly anal) needs. Whether or not we have described this cognitive realization and its consequences entirely correctly, it is clear that the child attains an emotional/cognitive basis from which it can relativize its perceptions of hatred in itself and other. The child learns that neither the hatred they perceive in the parent nor his/her hatred of the parent will destroy the internalized image of the

good object and the developing good self.

Resolution of the Crisis and Individual Patterning: Of course, system values are not revoked, rather they are abstracted and internalized; this constitutes a generalization of the pattern-maintenance structure which will allow the infant to provide motivation for and integrate more differentiated sets of activities. This emotional internalization of the relationship to the parent seems to be interdependent with the attainment of physical (Piagetian) object permanence (cf. Mahler, et al. 1975:111: they affect but are not sufficient predictors of one another). The parent is still unconsciously desired as the source of a boundless pleasure which has its roots in the delusion of unity. Yet the child becomes capable of integrating the expectation that such pleasure will not be forthcoming in all or even most day to day interaction with the parent. The child becomes capable of integrating the knowledge that the parent is not omnipotent. On the level of values, as things become more abstract, less rooted in physical and actual interaction, the child's perception of self and parent should change. Though rejection will always symbolize the dearth of gratification and aggression towards the bad parent, the dichotomy between good and bad is softened. With the child's comprehension of its own action, the same happens to the self representation. Tension reduction becomes focused on the internal capacity to find meaning in interpersonal and physical action and interaction. Just as in the separation and practicing subphases the infant's value structure changed so that it might become cognizant of tension "within" the symbiotic orbit, now values soften so that interpersonal "rejection" may be tolerated. Feelings or perceptions of hatred of the parent do not overwhelm the child, because they are

felt to be specific to patterns of interaction.

Thus the child can integrate the good and bad parent into a coherent object out there in the world. Having a stable sense of identity and relation the child constructs integrative norms which regulate its different spheres of interaction. In such spheres the child no longer directly pursues symbiotic omnipotence nor fears total abandonment. Though ultimately motivated by such values the child's action are justified by norms the goals and orientation of which are less extreme. For example, in interaction with the parent, the child no longer demands perfect goal-attainment. The child has as his or her conscious end, pleasurable, interaction with the parent. Similarly, the child no longer fears total abandonment by the bad parent. But rather the subphase distinctive and realistic "(f)ear of losing the love of the object (instead of fear of object loss) becomes increasingly evident." (Mahler, et al. 1975:78) Hatred of the parent, precisely because such hatred is normatively bound, no longer presents strain on the level of values.

With the abstraction, and to some degree no doubt, the rendering unconscious of the pattern-maintenance system, we find the emergence of norms which are universally valid in a particular field or "type" of interaction. Obviously it is quite difficult to precisely distinguish values and norms within the personality. In evaluating the distinction it might be well to think of pattern-maintenance elements as those general to all normal (and it would seem neurotic as well) human psyches. The integrating functions which constitute an obsessive-compulsive syndrome, for example, are just that, norms. Though some aspects of deeply rooted integrative functions are normatively imperative for the obsessive-compulsive's entire personality (on the level of values), they

are not general to personalities in general. What is on the level of values for a particular personality, is a particular type of integrative function for personalities in general. In a schizophrenic, however, I would suggest that the pattern-maintenance system is profoundly dysfunctional. The line is, as we have seen in the case of the neurotic, rendered more hazy by the fact that integrative functions utilized over time may come to have a bearing on the most inlaid elements of an individual's personality structure. Our arguments can be codified in two hypotheses. During the rapprochement subphase, the emotional valence of the particular parent-infant interaction ('love vs. aggression' Mahler, et al. 1975:77) is internalized as an essential feature of personality. The prototypical integrative behaviors of a particular child may become institutionalized as elements of the personality during this subphase either at the level of norms or, perhaps, values.

It is important to recognize that changes in the value (and more generally, the normative) structure are ways to describe processes which occur over time. In my discussion of the rapprochement subphase I may have slightly confused the placement of phenomena (both intrapsychic and observable) of the crisis and resolution periods. Nevertheless, this reflects a more general and understandable uncertainty regarding the timing of the consolidation of different structures. This is also true of the beginnings of individuality, directly related to creating an optimal or less than optimal distance from the parent; the consolidation of these elements provides a bridge to the next subphase, the "consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy." (Mahler, et al. 1975:109)

Through this subphase, the child has constructed individual

integrative structures and hence patterns of action on the basis of the internalized values it utilizes in autonomous functioning. Though the relation is complex, I believe that this is a precondition of the child's capacity for and utilization of identification as a source of positive cathexis and the re-evocation of system values. The child is able to function to an increasingly autonomous degree based on its internalization of the deep emotional valence which has prevailed in the relation with the parent. In order to produce pleasurable interaction with the parent the child often comes to do that which the parent does; the child identifies as a means of integrating experiences of the outer world. Legitimized by the internal image of the good parent, it is easy to understand how elements of identification may attain the status of values within the psychological system.

Yet even as we identify such new media of positive cathexis, we must stress the gradual, difficult nature of development. The child must accomplish many developmental tasks during this period. These include the integration of the consciousness of the difference between the sexes and the beginnings of gender identity. (I will not be discussing these phenomena. Thus rapprochement will not be fully elucidated, but the lack of such discussion would be more problematic if I were discussing child development in its entirety.) Both the child's particular patterns of interaction with the parent and identification, as the formulation of norms for action in the outside world, exemplify the child's capacity for engaging in differentiated, particular activities in this subphase. note that this stage can hang around for one's entire life. ((Discussion of differentiation on the basis of this abstraction. But the child still needs contact, identification follows logically.))

trying when left but not leaving if its empirically earlier might go earlier. With P's obj. constancy, we get understanding of small place in world. With differentiation, pathology may become much more complicated.

Both the child's particular patterns of interaction with the parent and identification, as the formulation of norms for action in the outside world, exemplify the child's capacity for engaging in differentiated, particular activities in this subphase. Mahler, et al. write that:

The vicissitudes of their [the children's] individuation process were changing so rapidly that they were no longer mainly phase specific, but individually very distinct, and different from one child to the other.
(1975:102)

That is, children are more easily understood individually than as age cohorts. "Each child had established by this time his own characteristic ways of coping." (Maher, et al. 1975:103)

Thus on the level of social interaction we have the differentiation as opposed to the segmentation of individuals (Gould, Chapter 6, forthcoming). Relationships with significant objects beside the primary caretaker become very important at this time. (In Mahler, et al.'s study the father was often the other significant object.) Such relationships are obviously an indice of the child's creation of normatively regulated spheres distinct from the pattern-maintenance system. The child's capacity for symbolic play is another example of the differentiation of spheres of activity. In symbolic play the child works out conflicts generally on the level of norms and goals by engaging in normatively regulated activities which are generally separate from the sphere of direct interaction with the parent(s).

The differentiation of procedures for attaining pleasure and tension reduction linked to but not constituted by the pattern-maintenance structure is evidence by communication in the rapprochement subphase.

Specifically, the child is pleased not only by doing for her/himself but by the parent directing attention at and speaking to the child. But let us trace the history of this differentiation. In the autistic phase, the infant, though physically dependent is not aware of the parent's caretaking. Symbiosis contains the first signals of expectation, but it is sensuous, tension reducing physical contact which provides pleasure. In practicing, too, though separateness is achieved and the parent's attention important, values are generally evoked through physical return to the parent. In the rapprochement subphase, however, the child, cognizant of his/her separation, internalizes the love of the parent, who becomes a separated loved object. Thus, the parent can re-evoke motivation and feelings of well being through communicating their interest symbolically to the child. Attention becomes a medium of tension reduction. It is fascinating not only that symbolic communication develops, but that, "(v)erbal communication becomes more and more necessary." Given the range of experiences and activities of the child, imprecise gestural coercion will not do. The child attempts to understand its environment in interaction with the expressed emotional content of the parent(s).

Notes

1. Mahler et al. tend to refer to the primary love object as the mother. For the children they observed, the primary love object was the mother and such a pattern is obviously common to many societies. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that fathers and persons other than the biological parents cannot play the caretaking role throughout the separation-individuation process. Hence I will refer to the primary love object as the parent, by which I mean the individual who plays the parenting role.

2. I will argue in the full section below that symbiosis is a subphase constitutive of and not a phase preceding the separation-individuation process. Hence I hold that the separation-individuation process commences with symbiosis at two months of age and ends "on the way to object constancy" somewhere between the thirtieth and thirty-sixth month. For the rest of the essay I will have these meanings in mind when I refer to the processes of separation-individuation and symbiosis.

3.5 The last subphase, on the way to object constancy, will not be discussed in this essay.

4. Though such activity, as well as visual pursuit of the parent, occurs during the autistic phase, only with the attainment of certain symbiotic achievements is action born. Only with the use of symbols, the smile which indicates expectation of tension reducing interaction, does the infant's behavior upon formulating desired ends become action 'designed' to realize these ends. Mahler et al. indicate their understanding of this subtle development by writing that only with entrance to symbiosis is there a temporary cathexis of the mother and/or her ministrations through the pressure of 'need.' (1975:46)

5. One could make a much less drastic argument emphasizing the continuous nature of development between the different subphases. It is well to remember in the midst of this drastic argument that autism and symbiosis are not things. They are stages which are used to describe and explain the phenomena infants manifest at certain periods in the life cycle. I am saying that the emergence of a psychological pattern-maintenance system can only be inferred on the basis of certain activities. Of course this subsystem develops over time, but when we can infer that it exists, I believe that it is auspicious to call the subphase symbiosis.

6. Our emphasis has been on the (positive) system values of symbiosis. However, for many infants the feeling of omnipotence is buried in a type of interaction in which the infant cannot be certain of the readiness and the completeness of the parent's caretaking and interacting response. System values operate, but trepidation may be high and there is a lack of basic trust (Mahler??).

7. The low level of differentiation of the system is highlighted by the form

of this capacity or energy. Roughly speaking this is an input into the adaptive subsystem; yet clearly only in adverse circumstances is this capacity used for anything but differentiating activities.

7. I do not mean to imply that all that the infant does deserves the name of action. The personality system is still at a very low order of differentiation and many activities are determined by biological factors (e.g. sleep). Nevertheless activities which were not originally engaged in purposefully may be repeated with a goal in mind.

8. Mahler, et al. note that in children who walk late the onset of the exhilaration associated with practicing also occurs later. But they do not address the issue of whether free, upright locomotion is a necessary condition for the entrance into practicing. Although distinctive of this period I would hypothesize that walking serves a catalytic function in practicing. If an infant could not walk, it might achieve progress more slowly through practicing, but its intrapsychic development would not be irrevocably altered. Obviously, empirical research is necessary.

9. Of course, the relationship between parent and child that I describe may be specific to certain cultures.

10. Though I cannot specify the interaction of the zonal modality with the infant's subphase specific psychodynamic needs, I think it important to raise the issue of what causes what and how such forces interact.

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