

International Review of Psychoanalysis of Couple and Family

N° 9 - 2011/1

Thinking the link: a review of the theory

**NARCISSISM AND OBJECTIFICATION.
COURSE OF AN UNDIFFERENTIATED BOND TOWARDS
AN INTERSUBJECTIVE BOND**

*MARTINE VERMEYLEN**

It imports us in our clinic to study with the couples and families, the difference between a differentiated bond and a bond not differentiated such as they are presented in pathologies.

The undifferentiated bonds slow down the processes of symbolization and transmission while blocking the autonomy of the subject. These bonds lock up the other in object-relationships which connect the subject to the other subjects through projections and unconscious introjections.

A differentiated intersubjective bond on the other hand, connects the subject and the other by taking account of the differences in opinions which can introduce conflictuality.

Anzieu (1985) spoke about differentiation of the skins and Racamier (1995) of differentiation of the beings.

Isn't this differentiation the starting point from which the subject will not perceive the other either like a desired or rejected object but like a similar and/or different desiring subject?

Can one already speak about a bond or formation of a bond when the child is taken initially in a indifferenciation between interior and exterior?

A fusional bond is certainly already a bond but in a relation with the object and it will have to adapt to it by considering the impulses. The result of this near therapeutic work is that the subject will become

* Psychologue, psychanalyste, thérapeute enfants-couples-familles.
martinevermeylen@live.be

aware of its own of libido push towards the object and of the inescapable brakes which it will have to transform.

This work will undoubtedly transform the relation with the object to the benefit of an emerging differentiated bond with the other. This action has a consequence on the transformation and the apprehension of another reality.

This work of realization of "the other that oneself" will influence the perception of the other in oneself.

The concept of desire of Melanie Klein (1957) and the difference introduced between the really good object and the imaginary good object were adopted by Donald Winnicott (1971). He developed the need for a really good object and not deprived so that the feeling of existential continuity of the subject develops. Can we not consider that the transitional stage is a mandatory phase in the development of a differentiated bond?

When the mother isn't "sufficiently good" and that she wouldn't allow the need for illusion of capacity of her child, the result could be a difficulty or even an incapacity of "alteration" i.e. of recognition of the other as different from oneself with consequences on the subject's mental birth.

The consequences would be that this subject cannot survive the inherent disillusion and challenges of reality.

The other consequence would be that the mother never ceases confusing herself with her child and that she can not leave the illusion of group and duality. We can recognise this mechanism in the undifferentiated bonds and incestuous present in the psychosis and perversion.

In projective identification we understand a process which allows the subject to adopt in oneself what it finds attracting from the other. As it cannot interiorize it, it will project it on to the other in an imaginary restriction. We remain in object-relationships of desire whereas the identification of oneself with the other could allow a differentiation.

The subject can then build itself by making the distinction between "ideal ego" i.e. what it thinks being, and "the ideal of myself" i.e. what it wishes to be, and finally "super-ego" i.e. what it wishes not to be in connection with tiers representing the social.

In the construction of an intersubjective bond such as Alberto Eiguer (2008) describes it in his book "Never me without you" on the recognition of the difference, the 4 R (Respect, Recognition, Responsibility, Reciprocity) constitute the foundation of this bond. For each one of these ingredients, one could each time integrate into it the

relation which passes through the object in its constituent phase before being connected to the other.

Wouldn't a bond with double input make it possible to distinguish each one of these instances or topics? Example: a man expresses respect for his wife and reciprocally, but their past family situation is characterised by violence which overtakes both of them. The object-relationship for one or the other passes by destruction before being able to transform itself into an intersubjective bond.

Before achieving recognition, the object-relationship can pass by denial or disqualification in which the other is disputed in its existence to be separate and different.

The same goes for the responsibility in a bond, a subject needs initially to encounter guilt feelings before building a super-ego able to integrate one another's freedom before being able to constitute a bond of interpersonal responsibility.

Finally to arrive at a feeling of reciprocity, the relation with the object passes by the desire before being able to integrate gratitude. Melanie Klein (1957) had already thought of it because gratitude is a form of counterpresent which allows the constitution of an intersubjective bond.

The idea of a theory of the intersubjective bond precisely makes it possible to locate the passages and the possible drifts of the object-relationships before being connected to the other.

These relations with the object take account the Freudian theory of the impulses of connection and disconnections, and imply the presence of a constant tension between narcissism and object-relationships.

If the subject invests the other like object to make "its own unit", it takes part in its narcissistic construction of the subject before being able to connect itself to the other subject. During this infant phase, the other can only be utilized in an unbearable way.

Isn't it precisely the role of psychoanalysis to suggest to work on the object-relationships to achieve subject relations?

Lacan distinguished the small other like object from impulse of the great other, and this one (A) can be constantly deposed by small A, which shows well the difference he made between the two states for the subject.

The concept of an "anti-narcissistic" impulse of Pasche (1969) also equals to this tension which makes the subject able to also invest the object in a not interested way and capable of a true constructive connection for itself?

According to him, there would be a double push towards the other according to the two instances or topics: on the one hand lack of oneself (narcissism) and on the other hand lack of the other (anti-narcissistic objectification).

The Freudian heritage does seem to us sometimes heavy to assume when it takes account only the object as well in the pre-object primary narcissism as in the secondary narcissism known as post-object?

If the impulse is only narcissistic or anti-narcissistic, what happened to authentic love other than a sublimated form to sublimate?

Kohut (1974) opened an interesting concept when he speaks about "connecting or disconnecting energy" according to the modification which it aims at producing (connection or disconnecting) and of the place where it tends to produce this modification (for the subject or the object).

For example, the binding energy of the subject or narcissism aims at reinforcing the subject using the object as way to achieve whereas the binding energy of the object (objectification) aims at reinforcing the object using the subject like a way to achieve. This system also functions in the direction of the energy of disconnection of the subject (anti-narcissism) and the object (anti-objectification) to destruct a system and to reinforce another according to the needs. Doesn't the fact that there is a system superior to the human being i.e. the mankind, allows the subject of being capable of a dash towards the other to organize and reinforce the homeostasis of this system or, in the contrary case, to disorganize itself to rebalance the homeostasis of the system in which he lives?

Can we not recognise here in a metapsychologic and systemic way that a subject is not sufficed through itself and all is not only narcissistic (or anti-narcissistic). The subject needs the object like means of surviving in this object impulse and for a goal external to itself.

One can imagine that the intersubjective bonds are built with the assistance of these concepts of anti-narcissism or anti-objectification with an aim of exceeding them in an energy of disconnection?

As Racamier (1995) proposed it, can we not consider the third psychic state or 3rd topic as being that of the intersubjective bond?

It is undeniable that these authors as well Pasche (1969) as Kohut (1974), do not consider the bond as what connects the subject to the other in an intersubjective way.

If we consider that the three psychic states (subject, object and bond) are autonomous systems, one would undoubtedly deal with systems sufficiently bound or sufficiently untied to allow a transformation.

In the psychoanalytical private clinic of couples and families, we observe these undifferentiated bonds which do not authorize the subject to come to consult for itself.

We are thus attentive to propose family or marital consultations before building a therapeutic bond of subject to subject with the 4 R as ethical foundation of an intersubjective bond.

Bibliography

- Anzieu D. (1985), *Le moi peau*, Paris, Dunod.
Eiguer A. (2008), *Jamais moi sans toi*, Paris, Dunod.
Klein M. (1957), *Envie et gratitude*, Paris, Gallimard, 1968.
Kohut H. (1974), *Le soi, psychanalyse des transferts narcissiques*, Paris, PUF.
Pasche F. (1969), *A partir de Freud*, Paris, Payot.
Racamier P.C. (1995), *L'inceste et l'incestuel*, Les éditions du Collège.
Winnicott D.W. (1971), *Jeu et réalité*, Paris, Gallimard.