ɔns theories,
ɪnt with suf-
ː of defense.
the infant–
ɔled her and
ir therapeu-
ılytic inter-
parts of her
ın with psy-
ıeory these
e the inter-
ː infant and

12

Summary: What Do Psychoanalytic Theories and Attachment Theory Have in Common?

As psychoanalytic theory cannot, at its current stage of evolution, be reduced to a singular coherent set of propositions, in this volume we have been forced to consider points of contact between attachment theory and particular traditions of psychoanalytic thought. Here we summarize the points of contact between the two approaches in more general terms, offering illustrative arguments to put to rest the prevailing view of incompatibility between these two frames of reference.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IS BEST STUDIED IN RELATION TO THE CHILD'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

As we have seen, Freud and Bowlby both began their theoretical contributions with concern about the psychological consequences of early deprivation (Bowlby 1944, Freud 1954). Freud's celebrated turning away from the seduction hypothesis (Masson 1984) did not com-

Fonagy, P. (2001) Summary: What Do Psychoanalytic Theories and Attachment Theory Have in Common? In: Attachment Theory and Psychoanalysis. New York: Other Press.

promise his position on the pathogenesis of childhood trauma (Freud 1917, 1931, 1939). Conversely, modern psychoanalytic readers might criticize Bowlby for the therapeutic realism of his approach, and his emphasis on the therapeutic qualities of cathartic recollections of traumatic events (Bowlby 1977). However, Bowlby's attention to the representation of experience (Bowlby 1980a) was not a return to the naïve realism of Freud's early theories. It represents an elaboration of the fourth phase of Freud's theory, the structural model (Freud 1923). Freud, like Bowlby, recognized that anxiety was a biologically determined epiphenomenal experience linked to the perception of both external and internal dangers (Freud 1926b), the psychological template for which was loss of the object. The move toward recognizing that adaptation to the external world had to be an essential component of the psychoanalytic account, and that such an account necessitated a reorganization of the theory in terms of a quasi-cognitive structure (Schafer 1983) is the essential common background for both ego psychological and attachment theory elaborations of the classical psychoanalytical model.

Bowlby was not the first psychoanalyst to focus on interpersonal rather than intrapsychic factors in pathogenesis. The Hungarian psychoanalyst Ferenczi (1933) pointed to the potentially traumatic nature of the adult's failure to understand meanings in the child's psychological world, thus anticipating risks associated with lack of sensitivity on the part of the child's primary objects. We have seen that emphasis on the quality of caregiving has featured in most of the dominant psychoanalytic traditions since Ferenczi, playing a particularly dominant role in the work of Spitz (1945, 1965), Erickson (1950, 1959), Winnicott (1962a), and Anna Freud (1941–1945, 1955). The common perception that there is an underlying epistemic difference in the ways that psychoanalysts and attachment theorists conceptualize the influence of the social environment glosses over the fact that these views have much in common. There are four key points of epistemological overlap.

Actual versus Psychic Reality

It is a fundamental tenet of both theories that social perception and social experience are distorted by expectations, both conscious and unconscious. In the structural model Freud (1923) described the ego's

capacity to create defenses that organize characterological and symptomatic constructions as part of the developmental process. This idea became a cornerstone of Bowlby's trilogy, particularly the last volume (Bowlby 1980a). Anna Freud's (1936) description of common mechanisms of defense can be readily restated in terms of mental representation, or rather its typical distortions (Sandler 1987a, Sandler and Rosenblatt 1962). Crittenden's (1990) work has made it possible to understand behaviors typical of avoidant and resistant attachment patterns in terms of the language of the defensive behaviors of infancy (Fraiberg 1982). More recently, we have attempted to demonstrate that transgenerational consistencies in attachment classification may be understood as internalization of the caregiver's defenses mobilized by the infant's distress (Fonagy et al. 1995a). Both modern attachment theory and modern psychoanalysis have as their fundamental epistemic aim the description of the internal mechanisms responsible for the discrepancy between actual and psychic reality.

Emphasis on Early Life

It is easy to show that both psychoanalysts and attachment theorists privilege the first years of life in their consideration of the relationship between social environment and personality development. Within psychoanalysis, this bias took some years to fully emerge and did so more or less contemporaneously with the development of Bowlby's ideas. For some time Melanie Klein's attempts to consider the first year of life as setting a template for subsequent phases of personality development (Klein 1935) were treated with skepticism by psychoanalytic developmentalists, particularly because of the level of cognitive sophistication she appeared to be willing to attribute to the infant in the first year of life (Yorke 1971). However, more sophisticated methods of observations of infant behavior revealed that the human infant possesses relatively complex mental capacities, even at birth, in some cases exceeding what was presupposed by Kleinian theory (Gergely 1991). Margaret Mahler is commonly credited with bringing observational methods to bear on the earliest phases of development. Her systematic observational studies, however, were based upon children in their third year of life (Gergely, in press). In fact much of the later criticism of Mahler's theories (e.g., Klein 1981, Stern 1985) fo-

cuses upon the fact that her characterizations of the earliest phases of the psychological birth of the infant are based on retrospective pathomorphic extrapolations from adult mental disorders. The emergence of self psychology as an alternative psychoanalytic framework (Kohut 1971) has contributed further to placing the earliest phases of development in the center of psychoanalytic theoretical interest. As concern with the real as opposed to the reconstructed infant grew within psychoanalysis, so psychoanalytic interest in attachment theory increased (e.g., Lichtenberg 1995).

Maternal Sensitivity and Mirroring

Beyond this converging interest in the early stages of development, there is a more specific common focus on maternal sensitivity as a causal factor in determining the quality of object relationships and, therefore, psychic development. However, attachment theory and psychoanalytic theories of development conceptualize the construct of maternal sensitivity in significantly different ways. Attachment theory describes sensitivity in a variety of ways that all involve behavior or personality characteristics of the caregiver (e.g., global ratings of responsiveness, accuracy of individual responses, personality traits of the caregiver, the quality of mental representation of the infant in the caregiver's mind [De Wolff and van Ijzendoorn 1997]). In psychoanalytic formulations sensitivity tends to be considered in terms of its consequences, its organizing impact on the child's self-development. There is also considerable heterogeneity amongst these conceptualizations. The Kleinian formulation of sensitive caregiving would be of a parent capable of absorbing and retransmitting the infant's psychological experience in a "metabolised" form (Bion 1967). The infant can accept and reinternalize what had been projected and transformed, thus creating a representation of these internal moments of interaction with the caretaker that it can tolerate. In time, Bion suggested, infants internalize the function of transformation and will acquire the capacity to regulate their own negative affective states. The nonverbal nature of this process implies that physical proximity of the caregiver is essential. Thus Bion's ideas may provide us with an alternative perspective of the sociobiological root of the infant's need for proximity to the psychological caregiver, the adult mind.

In a slightly different vein, Winnicott (1956) proposed that when the baby looks at the mother who is reflecting the baby's state, what he apprehends in the mother's expression is his own self-state. Thus, the mother's mirroring function is seen as essential for the establishment of the baby's self-representation. In Kohut's work (1971, 1977), probably as a consequence of his clinical interest in narcissism, the empathy concept was closely tied to considerations of self-evaluation (self-esteem). The psychoanalyst whose formulation most closely matches attachment theory concerns with caregiver behavior was Eric Erikson (1950). Erikson (1964), for example, conceived of basic trust as arising out of "the experience of the caretaking person as a *coherent* being, who reciprocates one's physical and emotional needs and therefore deserves to be endowed with trust, and whose face is recognised as it recognises" (p. 117).

There is a further indication that psychoanalytic concepts of sensitivity and those of attachment theorists pertain to related phenomena. Both attachment theorists and psychoanalysts have come to the conclusion that the ideal level of caregiver sensitivity from the point of view of infant development is moderate rather than perfect, both in terms of intensity and responsibility for the infant's state. Certainly, this idea is at the heart of Winnicott's notion of "good enough" parenting (Winnicott 1962a), Kohut's model of transmuting internalization (Kohut and Wolf 1978), and, most explicitly, in Erikson's writings. In *Childhood and Society* he suggests: "A certain ratio between the positive and the negative, which if the balance is towards the positive, will help him to meet later crises with a better chance of unimpaired development" (Erikson 1950, p. 61n). Erikson saw nonintrusiveness of the parent (Malatesta et al. 1986) as the mother not trying to control the interaction too much. Interactional synchrony (Isabella and Belsky 1991) is probably equivalent to Erikson's description of "reciprocity or mutual regulation." There is a shared common assumption that a well-regulated relationship with the caregiver leads to an autonomous, robust sense of self. Thus, while attachment theory and psychoanalytic formulations certainly differ in terms of their respective emphasis on caregiver behavior versus infant experience, in neither domain has a definitive formulation as yet emerged. We will suggest later that this critical facet of social development for both theories may provide an important area of cross-fertilization.

The Motivation for Forming Relationships

Contrary to Bowlby's prejudiced claims, modern psychoanalysis shares the fundamental assumption of attachment theory that the infant–caregiver relationship is not based on physical need but rather on some kind of independent autonomous need for a relationship. Bowlby's motivation to assert divergence from psychoanalysis on this point (Bowlby 1958) may have in part been rhetorical. As with any new theory, new ideas are brought into sharpest relief by asserting a dichotomy, even if this represents an oversimplification. More importantly, a lack of clarity arises out of overwhelming heterogeneity in psychoanalytic formulations on this point. Arnold Modell (1975), for example, suggested the existence of object relations instincts characterized by interaction processes rather than discharge. In the work of the British object relations school, the need for relationships is considered as a constitutional predisposition, which is described variously as "primary love" (Balint 1952), "object seeking" (Fairbairn 1952a), "ego relatedness" (Winnicott 1965b), or just "personal relations" (Guntrip 1961). In certain places Bowlby was explicit in his acknowledgment of these analysts, but felt he went beyond them by establishing a firm biological and evolutionary basis for their constructs.

Even within the British school, however, there is ambiguity in the treatment of the relationship construct. While for Balint and Winnicott the construct is unequivocally primary, for Fairbairn and Guntrip it is described as a need secondary to a primal need for psychic organization. This latter view is also implicit in Kernberg's model, which suggests that the self evolves as part of a relationship (Kernberg 1976a,b), as a product of internalization (introjection, identification, and ego identity). Yet other psychoanalytic writers appear to assume that the need for relationships arises as a defense against the vicissitudes of the child's internal world. We have already seen how the concept of proximity seeking may be derived from Bion's notion of containment (Bion 1967). Eric Erikson's closeness to the drive theory tradition may have also led him to infer that attachment played a secondary role, either facilitating identity development or being its by-product; it has the status of an intermediary link in the process of development towards individuation (Erikson 1968). In summary, modern psychoanalysis does not differ from attachment theory in the sense that it overlooks the child's

need for a relationship. There are, however, too many competing formulations as to the nature and origin of this need. Thus, the relevance of a singular and coherent account drawn from attachment theory should be evident. This kind of argument is beyond the scope of this work.

THE COGNITIVE UNDERPINNINGS OF EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A major strength of attachment theory is the relative clarity with which Bowlby describes the representational system that mediates and ensures the continuity of interpersonal behavior (Bowlby 1969). Bowlby's model has been elaborated and developed by two pioneers in the field: Inge Bretherton (Bretherton 1987) and Mary Main (Main et al. 1985a). Notwithstanding these advances, there are many critics of the internal working models concept, particularly from amongst developmental psychologists (e.g., Dunn 1996). At the heart of such critiques is the lack of specificity of Bowlby's model. How do expectations concerning the likely response of a caregiver to the infant's distress develop into generalized templates for social interaction? Mary Main's work on adults' discourse concerning early relationships demonstrated suggestive links between infant behavior in the strange situation and adult conversational styles, manner of speech rather than narrative content (Main and Goldwyn, in preparation). Thus attachment theory and research have increasingly focused on procedural as opposed to episodic or semantic memory systems (Schachter 1992) in understanding the continuity of social behavior from infancy to adulthood. A case could be made that a similar family of ideas is emerging in the field of psychoanalysis. There are several issues of relevance.

The Representation of Relationships

Originating in the work of Edith Jacobson (1954b), it is now generally accepted that mental representations of relationships of self and object are key determinants of interpersonal behavior. She introduced the concept of *representation* to stress that these referred to the experiential impact of internal and external worlds and were subject to distortion and modification irrespective of physical reality. A number of

theorists have elaborated these notions in postulating that roles are encoded for both subject and objects. For example, Sandler (1976a, 1987c) elaborated a model of the two-person interaction when the direct influence of one on the other is accounted for by the evocation of particular roles in the mind of the person who is being influenced. The behavior of the influencing person is seen as critical in eliciting a complementary response from the participant. Sandler suggests that in this way infantile patterns of relationships may be actualized or enacted in adult relationships. Daniel Stern (1994) and his co-workers in the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute (e.g., Morgan 1998, Sander, in press, Stern 1998, Tronick 1998) have gone a step further in developing the idea that therapeutic change occurs not as a consequence of insight or reflection on episodic memory but as a consequence of experiences that change procedural (implicit) memory. Stern discusses the schemata of ways-of-being-with as an emergent property of the nervous system that naturally aggregate the invariant aspects of interpersonal experience. He suggests (Stern 1998) that these are the building blocks of internal working models and, while this remains to be demonstrated, his work suggests a route whereby the micro-experiences of infant–mother interaction could become aggregated into enduring structures and subserve stable patterns of behavior.

The Relationship Context of Cognitive Development

Both attachment theory and psychoanalytic theory assume that early relationships provide the context within which certain critical psychological functions are acquired and developed. Alan Sroufe (1990) offered an imaginative framework whereby early interaction patterns between infant and caregiver were thought to translate into individual styles for the regulation of affect, which in their turn determined patterns of interaction. Affect regulation is seen as internalized in the course of infant–caregiver interaction. Bretherton (1979) and Main (1991) both claim that the development of symbolic function is crucially dependent on the harmony of mother–infant interaction. These workers suggest that secure attachment frees attentional resources necessary for the full development of symbolic cognitive capacities.

The notion that psychic functions may be internalized from primary object relationships is present in the writings of a number of psy-

choanalytic authors. Rene Spitz (1945), in particular, saw the child's human partner as quickening the development of his innate abilities and mediating all perception, behavior, and knowledge. Spitz made specific reference to the role of mother–infant interaction in the development of self-regulation (see also Greenacre 1952, Spitz 1959). Bion's (1959, 1962a) model of containment also assumes that the infant internalizes the function of transformation exercised by the caregiver, and through this acquires the capacity to contain or regulate his own negative affective states. Winnicott (1953) makes a strong claim concerning the evolution of symbolic function in the "transitional space" between infant and caregiver. Winnicott bases this assertion on an assumption that three conditions pertain: 1) a sense of safety associated with experiencing the inner world; 2) an opportunity for the infant deliberately to limit concern with external events; and 3) an opportunity to generate spontaneous creative gestures. These parameters may be considered analogous to Bowlby's (1969) secure base notion. Both see the evolution of cognitive structure as a function of infant–mother interaction.

Mentalization in Attachment Theory and Psychoanalysis

Mentalization is a specific symbolic function that is central to both psychoanalytic and attachment theory and that emerged concurrently in psychoanalytic and attachment theory thinking. Developmentalists over the past ten years have drawn our attention to the universal and remarkable capacity of young children to interpret the behavior of themselves, as well as others, in terms of putative mental states (e.g., Morton and Frith 1995). Reflective function enables children to conceive of others' beliefs, feelings, attitudes, desires, hopes, knowledge, imagination, pretense, plans, and so on. At the same time as making others' behavior meaningful and predictable, they are also able flexibly to activate from multiple sets of self–other representations the one most appropriate in a particular interpersonal context. Exploring the meaning of actions of others is crucially linked to the child's ability to label and find meaningful his or her own experience. This ability may make a critical contribution to affect regulation, impulse control, self-monitoring, and the experience of self-agency (Fonagy and Target 1997).

Reflective function is closely linked to attachment. The frequency of both prospective mothers' and fathers' references to mental states in their accounts of their own childhood attachment experiences powerfully predict the likelihood of their children being securely attached to them (Fonagy et al. 1991a). If secure attachment is conceived of as the acquisition of procedures (implicit memories) for the regulation of aversive states of arousal (Carlsson and Sroufe 1995, Cassidy 1994, Sroufe 1996), it may be argued that such information is most likely to be consistently acquired and coherently represented when the child's acute affective state is accurately, but not overwhelmingly, reflected back to the child. Secure attachment may thus have a great deal in common with successful containment (Bion 1962a). What is critical is the mother's capacity mentally to contain the baby and respond, in terms of physical care, in a manner that shows awareness of the child's mental state yet reflect coping (mirroring distress while communicating an incompatible affect [Fonagy et al. 1995b]). If secure attachment is the product of successful containment, insecure attachment may be seen as the infant's identification with the caregiver's defensive behavior. A dismissing caregiver may fail to mirror the child's distress, while a preoccupied caregiver may represent the infant's state with excessive clarity. In either case, the opportunity for the child to internalize a representation of his mental state is lost. Proximity to the caregiver is in this case maintained at the cost of a compromise to reflective function. Bowlby (1969) recognized the significance of the developmental step entailed in the emergence of "the child's capacity both to conceive of his mother as having her own goals and interests separate from his own and to take them into account" (p. 368). A number of empirical findings support the relationship of attachment security and reflective function. Attachment security is a good predictor of metacognitive capacity in the domains of memory, comprehension, and communication (Moss et al. 1995). Attachment security with mother has been found to be a good predictor of belief-desire reasoning in 3½- to 6-year-old children in both cross-sectional (Fonagy et al. 1997a) and longitudinal studies (Fonagy 1997, Meins et al. 1998). On the basis of such findings, we have argued that the child's acquisition of reflective function, the tendency to incorporate mental state attributions into internal working models of self–other relationships, depends on the opportunities that he had in early life to observe and explore the mind of his pri-

mary caregiver. The parent of the secure child engages in behaviors such as pretend play, which almost obliges the child to contemplate the existence of mental states.

The caregiver's understanding of the child's mind encourages secure attachment; the caregiver's accurate reading of the child's mental state, moderated by indications that the adult has coped with the child's distress, underpins the symbolization of the internal state, which in turn leads to superior affect regulation (Gergely and Watson 1996). Secure attachment provides a relatively firm base for the acquisition of a full understanding of minds. The secure infant feels safe in thinking about the mental state of the caregiver. By contrast, the avoidant child shuns the mental state of the other, while the resistant child focuses on its own state of distress to the exclusion of intersubjective exchanges. Disorganized infants may represent a separate category; hypervigilant to the caregiver's behavior, they may appear to be acutely sensitive to the caregiver's mental state yet fail to generalize this to their own mental state (self-organization), which remains disregulated and incoherent.

Is this model, derived from attachment theory, any different from traditional psychoanalytic accounts? We would argue "no" on a number of grounds: 1) the notion of reflective function or mentalization is already present in Freud's (1911) notion of *Bindung*, or linking. *Bindung* refers to the qualitative change from the physical (immediate) to the psychological (associative) quality of linking; 2) Melanie Klein (1945), in describing the depressive position, stressed that it necessarily entailed the recognition of hurt and suffering in the other, that is, the awareness of mental states. Although her emphasis is upon individual recognition of destructive wish, clearly this cannot arise without awareness of intentionality in both self and other; 3) we have already touched on Bion's (1962a, 1962b) description of containment. He delineates the transformation ("alpha function") of internal events experienced as concrete ("beta elements") into tolerable, thinkable experiences; 4) Winnicott (1962a) was perhaps closest to these ideas from attachment theory in recognizing the importance of the caregiver's *psychological* understanding of the infant in the emergence of the true self, and in acknowledging the dialectical aspect of this relationship. The psychological self develops through perception of oneself in another person's mind as thinking and feeling. Parents who cannot reflect with understanding on their child's inner experience and respond accord-

ingly deprive the child of a core psychological structure that he or she needs to build a viable sense of self; 5) independently, French psychoanalysts developed a notion of mentalization, largely rooted in the economic point of view. Marty (1968) considered mentalization to be a protective buffer in the system preconscious, with a capacity to prevent progressive disorganization. He saw mentalization as the function that linked drive excitations and internal representations and thereby created flexibility (both "fluidity" and "constancy") (Marty 1990, 1991). Thus, according to Marty, mentalization ensures freedom in the use of associations as well as permanence and stability, a description strikingly similar to Bowlby's account of the capacities of the securely attached child; 6) another French psychoanalyst, Pierre Luquet (1981, 1988), discussed the development of different forms of thinking and the reorganization of inner experience alongside this development. In his chapter on the theory of language (Luquet 1987) he distinguished primary mentalization (which is really the absence of mentalization or reflective capacity) from secondary (symbolic) mentalization. While this form of mentalization was still seen as closely connected to sensory data and primary unconscious fantasy, it was also seen as representative of these processes and observable in dreams, art, and play (see also Bucci 1997). His third level was verbal thought, which he considered the most distant from bodily processes. Similar distinctions have been proposed by Green (1975), Segal (1957), McDougall (1978), and more recently in the United States by Frosch (1995), Busch (1995), and Auerbach (1993, Auerbach and Blatt 1996).

Thus the notion of an intersubjectively acquired abstract reflexive implicit awareness of mental states, to be distinguished from introspection (Bolton and Hill 1996), has always been at the core of many psychoanalytic formulations of self development. The fruitful integration of this classical idea with the relationship constructs of attachment theory serves to illustrate the potential of bringing psychoanalytic ideas to bear on attachment theory and, perhaps, vice versa.

Mentalization and the Complex Relations between Actual and Psychic Reality

We have in past papers attempted to draw together clinical and research evidence to show that a normal awareness of the relationship

between internal and external reality is not universal, but rather a developmental achievement (Fonagy and Target 1996, Target and Fonagy 1996). It is the consequence of the successful integration of two distinct modes of differentiating internal from external in the young child intricately tied to the earliest relationships. We see development as normally moving from an experience of psychic reality in which mental states are not related to as representations, to an increasingly complex view of the internal world, which has as its hallmark the capacity to mentalize: to assume thoughts and feelings in others and in oneself, and to recognize these connected to outer reality (but only loosely). Initially, the child's experience of the mind is as if it were a recording device, with exact correspondence between internal state and external reality. We use the term *psychic equivalence* to denote this mode of functioning, to emphasize that, for the young child, mental events are equivalent in terms of power, causality, and implications, to events in the physical world.[1] Equating internal and external is inevitably a two-way process. Not only will the small child feel compelled to equate appearance with reality (how it seems is how it is), but also thoughts and feelings, distorted by fantasy, will be projected onto external reality in a manner unmodulated by awareness that the experience of the external world might be distorted in this way.

---

1. The term *psychic equivalence* may, with hindsight, be unfortunate in the light of Segal's concept of the "symbolic equation," which may appear to overlap with the formulation proposed here and in the previous papers. Our understanding of Segal's important concept entails the relationship of signified and signifier, rather than internal and external. Segal discusses confusions often observed in psychotic states, where the symbolic character of a representation is lost and there is an equation between the symbol and the thing it represents. Thus, playing the violin no longer carries a symbolic meaning of masturbation, it becomes that activity. Our concept of psychic equivalence is more restricted. We are concerned with the quality of states of mind, and here the term *equivalence* does not denote an equation of the symbolic vehicle with the idea represented, but rather the assumption that what is thought about has to be actual. This is not unidirectional, as the child also assumes, in an omnipotent way, that everything that is actual is known to him. There is, however, an area of overlap between Segal's and our descriptions that might be helpfully clarified. Take, for example, a 3-year-old who cannot go to sleep because a man's dressing gown hanging behind his bedroom door terrifies him. He says that he knows it is only a dressing gown, but when he starts going to sleep it turns into a bad man who is going to steal him from his bed in the night. Evidently, the dressing gown may be considered as symbolically equated with the frightening man, and the child reacts as though they were the same.

Perhaps because it can be terrifying for thoughts and feelings to be experienced as concretely real, the small child develops an alternative way of construing mental states. In *pretend mode*, the child experiences feelings and ideas as totally representational, or symbolic, as having no implication for the world outside. Even though the 2-year-old knows that when he pretends to be a policeman he does not become one, this is not because he understands that he is being a pretend policeman, but rather because the form of psychic reality that allows him to pretend requires strict separation from external reality (Gopnik and Slaughter 1991). His play can then form no bridge between inner and outer reality. Only gradually, and through safe closeness to another person who can simultaneously hold together the child's pretend and serious perspectives, does the integration of these two modes give rise to a psychic reality in which feelings and ideas are known as internal, yet related to what is outside (Dunn 1996).

The Background of Security and a Theory of Self-Development

We have suggested that the emergence of mentalizing is deeply embedded in the child's primary object relationships, first in the mirroring relationship with the caregiver. This is conceived somewhat differently from the traditional psychoanalytic concepts of mirroring proposed by Kohut (1977), Bion (1962a), and Winnicott (1956). It is much more akin to the model recently described by Gergely and Watson (1996). We suggest that the infant only gradually realizes that he has feelings and thoughts, and slowly becomes able to distinguish these. This happens mainly through learning that his internal experiences are meaningfully related to by the parent, through her expressions and other responses. These habitual reactions to his emotional expressions focus the infant's attention on his internal experiences, giving them a shape so that they become meaningful and increasingly manageable. Primary representations of experience are organized into secondary representations of these states of mind and body (Fonagy and Target 1997). The experience of affect is the bud from which eventually mentalization can grow, but only in the context of at least one continuing, safe attachment relationship. The parent who cannot think about the child's mental experience deprives him of the basis for a viable sense of him-

self (Fonagy and Target 1995a). This is a familiar idea in psychoanalysis. Bion (1962a) described how, for the infant, repeated internalization of the mother's processed image of his thoughts and feelings provides containment; Joyce McDougall (1989) has said "a nursling, through its cries, bodily gestures and somato-psychic reactions to stress, gives nonverbal communications that only a mother is able to interpret. She functions, in this respect, as her baby's thinking system" (p. 169). This "adequate" response not only involves interpreting the baby's physical expressions, but also giving him back a manageable version of what he is communicating (Winnicott 1956). The absence or distortion of this mirroring function may generate a psychological world in which inner experiences are poorly represented, and therefore a desperate need is created for alternative ways of containing psychological experience and the mental world. These ways may, for example, come to involve various forms of self-harm or aggression towards others (Fonagy et al. 1993a, Fonagy and Target 1995a).

Within a secure or containing relationship, the baby's affective signals are interpreted by the parent, who is able to reflect on the mental states underlying the baby's distress. For this reflection to help the baby, it needs to consist of a subtle combination of mirroring and the communication of a contrasting affect. The nature of the object's mirroring may be most easily understood in the context of our description of the parent's pretend play with the child: thus, to contain the child's anxiety, the mother's mirroring expression will display a complex affect, which combines fear with an emotion incompatible with it, such as irony. At one level, this communicates that there is nothing truly to worry about, but more importantly the parent's reaction, which is the same yet not the same as the baby's experience, creates the possibility of generating a second order (symbolic) representation of the anxiety. This is the beginning of symbolization. We have also discussed how language is well adapted to this task (Fonagy and Fonagy 1995), for example, speakers frequently, quite unconsciously, combine two patterns of intonation, each characteristic of a different emotion. The listener is affected by both, even when only one of the affects expressed is consciously perceived. We believe that the infant is soothed (or contained) through much the same process. If the parent is unable to respond in this way, the infant's distress is either avoided or mirrored

without first being "metabolized" and the child tends to internalize her defenses. In extreme cases, the process of self-development may be compromised, and a vulnerability is created to a highly maladaptive defense, that of inhibiting mentalization. Even in less extreme cases, parent–child relationships in which mirroring has been inadequate may lay the groundwork for subsequent distortions of personality development in one of two ways. These correspond to the two early modes of experiencing psychic reality. The mother may echo the child's state without modulation, as in the mode of psychic equivalence, concretizing or panicking at the child's distress. Alternatively she may avoid reflection on the child's affect through a process akin to dissociation, which effectively places the mother in a pretend mode, unrelated to external reality, including the child's genuine feelings or intentions. The mother may then ignore the child's distress, or translate it into illness, tiredness, and so on. Both ways of sidestepping the child's communication strip it of the potential for a meaning that he can recognize and use. It may also lead to a currency between parent and child of interpretation of feelings in physical terms, so that the physical state is the "real" thing. Lynne Murray (Murray and Cooper 1997), in her work with mothers suffering from puerperal depression, has provided some vivid illustrations of such mothers offering an alternative reality, marked by the exaggeration associated with pretense, and not related to the infant's expressions. The infant has not been able to find a recognizable version of his mental states in another person's mind, and the opportunity to acquire a symbolic representation of those states has been lost. Normally the child achieves control over affect partly through this kind of symbolization. The representation of his feelings is increasingly associated with the modulation included in her reflection of them. The reflection is clearly related to the original feelings, but is not the same. The infant will map the mother's modulated reaction on to his own feelings, and slowly learns that symbolic "play" with affect can bind his emotional and physiological reactions. Clinically this would mean that the child who has not received recognizable but modified images of his affective states may later have trouble in differentiating reality from fantasy, and physical from psychic reality. This may restrict him to an instrumental (manipulative), rather than signal (communicative) use of affect. This instrumental use of affect is a key aspect of the tendency

of borderline patients to express and cope with thoughts and feelings through physical action, against their own bodies or in relation to other people. Central to understanding this, we suggest, is the fact that delayed or absent secondary representation of affect constrains the development of the child's psychic reality. The integration of the two primitive modes of experiencing mind (equivalence and pretence) normally begins in the second year of life and is partially completed by the fifth or sixth years (Target and Fonagy 1996). We see this integration as the achievement of mentalization, which has been described in the psychoanalytic literature under various headings (see the excellent review by Lecours and Bouchard 1997).

Awareness of the physical separateness of bodies, and even of mental states, does not immediately bring with it the capacity to identify or attribute a plausible mental state to another person. Common observations of the young child, toddlers, and even 3- and 4-year-olds readily confirm that, as far as the boundaries of the psychological self are concerned, a young child readily assumes that his object's desires are the same as his own. A boy of 4, in a considerable temper, warned his mother that he no longer wanted to sleep in her bed, or have a birthday party, or even have a Megazord (a prized model from the Power Rangers). He assumed that his mother's desires were identical to his and her sense of loss at these deprivations would be as great as his. A borderline child treated by George Moran offered food to the analyst when George asked whether he was hungry. The mental boundaries of the self probably remain permeable throughout development and perhaps even in adulthood. Sandler (1992) stressed the importance of primary identification as underpinning empathic gestures (for example, correcting one's stance when seeing somebody else slip). Normally these experiences are circumscribed, preconscious, and limited to the earlier stages of perception. Nevertheless their very existence underscores the importance of intersubjective states that lay the ground for self-knowledge. *At the core of the mature child's self is the other at the moment of reflection.* The mental representations of mental representations are object-images congruent with internal states, yet not identical with them. They share elements of the child's self sufficiently coherent and stable for the formation of a symbolic link and for the child to construct further self-representations in the physical absence of the object.