

## **THEORY & REVIEW**

# **RAPPROCHEMENT IN THE PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TODDLER: A Transactional Perspective**

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*The concept of rapprochement, central to separation-individuation theory, is examined and reinterpreted from a transactional perspective. A range of naturally occurring confrontations and conflicts between toddlers and their caregivers is addressed to advance the idea that rapprochement is a continuing rather than phase-specific process of early development.*

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With the acquisition of upright, free locomotion and with the closely following attainment of that stage of cognitive development that Piaget regards as the beginning of representational intelligence, . . . the human infant has emerged as a separate and autonomous person. These two powerful "organizers" . . . constitute the midwives of psychological birth. In this final stage of the "hatching" process, the toddler reaches the first level of identity—that of being a separate individual entity. (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975, p. 77)

**T**hus did Mahler introduce the codified form of the rapprochement subphase covering the period of 15 or 16 months to 24 months (see also Mahler, 1972; Mahler & McDevitt, 1980). Rapprochement is the culmination of steps taken by the infant from symbiotic union with the mother to an established sense of separateness and personal identity, the apotheosis of which is the phase of consolidated individuality and emotional object constancy directly following the subphase of rapprochement. It is a

period of waning imperviousness to frustration and increased displays of separation anxiety. The key element is the child's acute awareness of separateness, an awareness that is stimulated on the one hand by maturationally-acquired abilities to move away from the mother, and on the other hand by cognitive growth.

Rapprochement connotes a process of detente and reconciliation following a rupture in relations (Mahler, 1961, p. 413). The toddler acts according to the aroused senses of separateness and ambivalence that form around the looming poles of autonomy-independence and loss. Because in the previous subphase (Practicing) the infant's need for closeness has been of its own accord "held in abeyance" (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, p. 78), the child's putative increased frequency of approaches to the mother during the Rapprochement subphase, along with greater degrees of clamor in this respect,

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warrants the term that is assigned to this subphase.

The major affect constellation during rapprochement is depression coupled with anxiety concerning re-engulfment. To be sure, there are pleasures connected to experiences of new things, and elations at independent discoveries and pursuits. But central to the period is the child's acute experience of separateness and what Mahler et al. convey as the correlated loss of omnipotence, and these account for significant portions of the child's vulnerability to depression and anxiety.

At the very height of mastery, toward the end of the practicing period, it has already begun to dawn on the junior toddler that the world is *not* his oyster, that he must cope with it more or less "on his own," very often as a relatively helpless, small, and separate individual, unable to command relief or assistance merely by feeling the need for it, or even by giving voice to that need.

[While] individuation proceeds very rapidly and the child exercises it to the limit, he also becomes more and more aware of his separateness and employs all kinds of mechanisms in order to resist and undo his actual separateness from the mother. . . . [No] matter how insistently the toddler tries to coerce the mother, she and he can no longer function effectively as a dual unit—that is to say, the child can no longer maintain his delusion of [shared] parental omnipotence, which he still at times expects will restore the symbiotic status quo [ante]. . . . He must gradually and painfully give up the delusion of his own grandeur, often by way of dramatic fights with the mother . . . (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, pp. 78–79).

The painful nature of this process has been repeatedly emphasized. Bergman (1978) stated that the toddler in the rapprochement subphase "is repeatedly faced with feelings of helplessness" (p. 158). According to Blanck and Blanck (1979), the "writers of the Bible put it more poetically—Paradise is Lost" (p. 8). According to Mahler and McDevitt (1980),

the three basic fears in early development—the fear of loss of the object, loss of the object's love, and castration anxiety—all come together during this subphase (p. 405).

The child, they assert, is specifically threatened with a collapse of self-esteem (p. 404). Accordingly, the child:

employs all kinds of mechanisms to resist and undo this painful sense of separateness from his mother, while, at the same time, he experiences a great desire to expand his newly developing autonomy. He is torn between the wish to stay near mother and a compulsion to move away from her, between the desire to please her and the anger directed against her, the latter being brought on by the jealousies and possessiveness characteristic of the anal phase, as well as by reactions to the anatomical sexual differences, particularly in the little girl at this age. (Mahler & McDevitt, 1980, pp. 404–405)

Mahler (1961, 1966) fashioned a whole fabric of loss and grief around this psychological situation.

Two behavior patterns, then, epitomize the rapprochement subphase: shadowing and darting away. They "indicate both [the child's] wish for reunion with the love object and his fear of re-engulfment by it." (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, p. 79).

At the foundation of the rapprochement concept is the belief that the child's original condition of object-related psychic life is one of symbiotic unity and omnipotence. Following the allegorical prose of Ferenczi (1913) and others in the psychoanalytic movement who wrote similarly, Mahler and her followers emphasized the terrible losses bestowed by the rapprochement period. The major developmental task is "to renounce [sic] symbiotic omnipotence" (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, p. 107).

This realization [of separateness] greatly challenge[s] the feeling of grandeur and omnipotence of the practicing period, when the little fellow had felt "on top of the world". . . . What a blow to the hitherto fully-believed omnipotence; what a disturbance to the bliss of dual unity! (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, p. 90)

The acuteness and magnitude of the polarity of separateness and union account for what Mahler termed the *rapprochement crisis*. Much of the theoretical connection between rapprochement and later clinical phenomena rests with reconstructions of early childhood events and conditions that have

been made from adult forms of psychopathology, particularly their intrapsychic concomitants (*Hartcollis, 1977; Lax, Bach, & Burland, 1980; Masterson, 1982*). Disagreement exists within the psychoanalytic community over the degree to which direct translations between early experiences, or experiential paradigms, and present personality organization can be made (*Etchagoyen, 1982; Schafer, 1982; Segal, 1982; Solnit, 1982*).<sup>\*</sup> Following Spence (*1982, 1986*), I believe that while reconstructions may serve the therapeutic aim of developing thematic continuities between hypothetical early object relations paradigms and experiences on the one hand, and current adjustment patterns and problems on the other, from the standpoint of the scientific standards needed for establishing *actual* continuities, reconstruction is simply unsound.

From a number of vantage points, including those of observable infant social interactive behavior, epistemology, and logic, the attributions of symbiosis and omnipotence as cardinal features of infant psychic life have been effectively dismissed (*Hamilton, 1982; Klein, 1981; Peterfreund, 1978; Stern, 1985*). Against prevalent positions anchored in both the child and adult psychoanalytic literature, and citing relevant empirical studies, I recently emphasized what I believe the psychic life of the infant to be (*Horner, 1985*), summarized as follows:

1. The original psychic condition of life is one of sensory, perceptual, and cognitive distinctions, thereby making a theory of naturally-occurring symbiotic fusion (which is, epistemologically considered, not the same as non-differentiation) unserviceable if not untenable.

2. The objective position of the infant is one of competence to engage the world both socially and instrumentally with regard to the inanimate object world. Its subjective position is one of experiencing the pleasures of mastery and the frustrations of impediments imposed by the physical and social worlds of experience. Although feelings of consummation, triumph, elation, and exaltation are within the range of pleasures that can be objectifiably discerned in infants, it is theoretically unserviceable and untenable to ascribe to the infant a basic subjective position of omnipotence.

3. Clinical reconstructions, no matter how thematically persuasive, are methodologically inferior means of ascertaining either the action or validity of specific dynamics in earlier periods of development. It was once appropriate to comment that, because of its lack of language, the psychic life of the infant was inaccessible except by the indirect method of reconstruction. But with the powerful observational and measurement paradigms that have been developed in the past two decades this assertion must be greatly altered, if not rejected.

#### TRANSACTIONAL FACTORS

##### *Naturally Occurring Conflicts*

From its extrauterine outset, human life is characterized by a dialectic of tensions and congruencies within relationships. This dialectic is based on instinctual and acquired needs, as well as on collective patterns of interpersonal exchange. Freud saw this dialectic in terms of the individual vs culture/civilization. He centered neurosis, as well as development in general, on the internalized version of this basic condition of conflict. Trivers (*1974*) has discussed

<sup>\*</sup> While few doubt that global and perhaps even some specific continuities exist between early and later development periods (*Emde & Harmon, 1984; Rutter, 1984; Hinde, 1982*), except for various thematic and formal resemblances which risk false or moot inferences about continuities (*Spence, 1982*) they are extremely elusive. Certainly, as Kagan (*1984a, 1984b*) has pointed out, there are strong culturally-anchored philosophical biases toward seeking and finding continuities. Perhaps, as Kagan suggests, the emergence of self-awareness (which is not the same as the loss of a symbiotic condition) in the second year allows for continuities to become more apparent. (*Brim & Kagan, 1980*.)

the dialectic from a sociobiological perspective, citing natural processes of competition and conflict in parent-offspring relations. He wrote that offspring are "psychological manipulators," that is, they possess capacities actively to affect parental behavioral states that are in direct and biologically determined conflict with them. Although Trivers's discussion is constructed along the lines of dynamically operating predispositions in primates, particularly at the point of weaning, it applies to the human condition quite as well. The conflicting nature of parent and infant interests inevitably permeates the lifespan of each, rendering no unique status in this respect to the period of so-called rapprochement.

The affectional and competence moorings of successful and self-fulfilled development are rooted (but not guaranteed) in positive attachment relationships established with caregivers early in life (*Bowlby, 1969*). Although many positive affects occur within such a context, love and the basic sense of security that devolves from emotionally available caregivers play key organizing roles in the formation and deepening of positive relationships. They are the basis of the individual's being able to withstand the naturally occurring doses of frustration that arise in the course of everyday life, and they are the basis of a condition of solidified attachment that psychoanalysis has long defined as object constancy—that is, loyalty to the love object despite that person's frustrating properties (*Fraiberg, 1969*).

The parent also establishes a condition of constancy toward the infant, who is an object of love, and, as such, is also a natural source of periodic frustration that is withstood by the parent through the operation of that very same condition of love-anchored loyalty.

Love, the center of the early caregiving relationship, is thus a two-way process and has regulating and security-engendering functions with respect to each partner's ca-

capacity to frustrate the other. For the parent, love is the wellspring of authentic soothing, the mainstay of authentic forbearance, and the foundation-piece of authentic, confident expectation that life's impasses can be overcome. For the infant it is the crucible of self-engendered positive impacts on the caregiving environment.

Equipped with cognitive-memory acquisitions (*Kagan, 1984a, 1984b*), the toddler gives ground much less readily than heretofore to parent-induced distractions and is thus an increasingly formidable adversary in situations of conflict. As a result, conflicts are likely to be more intense, protracted, and requiring of parent compromise than during the first year of the child's life. The social context in which a conflict arises plays a significant role in its course and outcome. Who, for example, has not observed a toddler achieve victory over a forbidding parent in the market check-out line only because of the latter's wish not to create a public scene? Who, also, has not observed a toddler vanquished in the same context by a mother who was not inhibited by the idea of public display of her control. Finally, who has not observed the tactics of older toddlers who have discerned that some settings (*e.g.*, grandparents' homes) are natural for pushing some issues beyond the limits that have been otherwise established?

Whereas infant care entails a series of parental compromises from the outset, toddlerhood ushers in new levels of compromise. In the first year of the child's life, parents compromise for the infant's well-being in view of the child's dependent status and lack of significant comprehension of interpersonal situations. With the onset of toddlerhood there occurs a shift in the parents' perception of the child's capacities and dispositions for intentional behavior. Parents now experience (with justification, it seems, when developmental research is brought to bear) the child as more calculating in its self-assertions than before. Among

other things, the most important of which is continuation of mutual love and attachment, the toddler and parents assert their respective and sometimes conflicting aims. On the parents' side this typically entails socialization agendas and establishment of authority; on the child's side the agenda is likely to be more concrete and immediate to the conflict at hand. The process of achieving developmental compromise, then, requires an understanding, accommodating adult and a temperamentally compliant child whose capacities for control and resilience (*Block & Block, 1980; Waters & Sroufe, 1983*) are developing in pace with parental expectations and tolerance levels.

Given the putative dynamics of its symbiotic prestages, rapprochement is a logical term to characterize the period in which the child makes its first significant departures from symbiotic ties with the mother. Rapprochement connotes reconciliation after a rupture. It therefore takes into account the tensions that naturally exist between caregiver and child. But its assignment to a specific developmental period (in which the tensions are connected specifically to the simultaneous needs to dissolve and recapture the symbiotic union, and to avoid the loss of the individuated self) must be justified by appropriate subjective factors within the child. Moreover, rapprochement connotes a more critical period for this process than is warranted, for it implies that there have never been such conflicts before and that, barring arrest or fixation, they will never occur in quite the same way again. To be sure, in Mahlerian terms the critical aspect of the rapprochement period is vitally connected to the child's specific self-representational status, but with that status now revised (*Horner, 1985; Stern, 1985*) the concept of it as critical—that is, phase-specific—is dismissed.

Certainly there are losses in the toddler's life—the toddler reported by one parent, for example, to be sad because she could no longer put on panties she had outgrown; or

the young toddler from whom the breast or bottle is now withheld. Certainly, also, there are individuating landmarks. But the central organizing feature of this developmental period is not the loss of symbiotic union and the correlated fear of self- and autonomy-destroying reattainment *per se*, but the dynamic of individually distributed and separately felt interests and needs for the child and caregiver that are in varying states of conflict and resolution. Each member of the caregiving dyad is both subject and object of the aforesaid dialectic virtually from the full-term newborn period. (The achievement of infant-maternal rapport following the early period of homeostatic regulation, which both Sander [*1975*] and Greenspan [*1981*] have recognized as part of an original transactional condition of infancy, could with equal logic be termed a period of rapprochement—and often is when the period has been stormy, *e.g.*, characterized by colic.) This is why Stern's (*1984, 1985*) concept of early affect attunement is so important. It allows two subjectivities to remain a part of our thinking, not only about disturbances and their etiological and transactional course, but also about normal patterns of development and adjustment.

#### *The Infant's Perspective*

From a point in time that is much closer to full-term birth than traditionally estimated by psychoanalytic theorists, infants make sensory, perceptual, and cognitive distinctions. These warrant the assumption of an abiding condition of subjectivity around which maturationally or experientially derived expansions in mental capacity are unified, and in regard to which experiences of nonsubjective events are processed as such (*Stern, 1985*). Two corollaries to this are that 1) from the outset of full-term extra-uterine life there is an active, engaging nature in humans which operates according to a unifying capacity; and 2) there are tensions elemental to being human (one of the most significant of which is being someone

else's experience) which can impair or grossly affect the course and eventual security of the unifying capacity. In this respect, the basic principle governing the positive social behavior of individuals in each other's company is the maintenance of a sense of well-being derived from the experiences, security, and control of conditions and events in which one is ensconced.

The infant's principal subjective experience of the other, particularly the parent, is as mediator or, as Spitz conceived it, auxiliary ego. Unfortunately, too much has been made of this role as an actual part (hence symbiotically organized) of the infant's ego-self. Not enough emphasis has been placed on its auxiliary nature: from the very young infant's standpoint others are externally located and perceived sources of help. The still-face studies of Tronick, Als and Adamson (1979) as well as our own maternal distraction studies (Horner & Carlson, 1985) demonstrate how much, even at very young ages (3–4 months), infants try to overcome barriers to interaction imposed by the mother. Field's (1977) studies of same-aged infants' responses to patterns of maternal intrusion bear similar testament to behavioral controls (gaze aversion) exerted by infants to withstand that intrusion.

The subjective experience of the infant, then, is one built of direct and self-induced contacts and resistances around interpersonal events. As such, the experience entails distinctions, not mergings (Horner, 1985; Stern, 1985).

#### *The Caregiver's Perspective*

With regard to the alleged omnipotence felt by the infant in the Symbiotic and Practicing subphases of separation-individuation development, four sources of ascription are stimulated in adults by infants that are in their day-to-day care (Horner, 1985, pp. 338–339): 1) Infants' failures, indispositions, or inability to follow the organized routines expected or demanded by the adult. 2) Infants' nondeliberate capacities

to thwart the intents and efforts of the adult through their egocentrically-governed persistences and insistencies. 3) Adults' (particularly single caregivers') vulnerabilities to feeling enslaved by the involvement demands of the infant. 4) Adults' inclinations to exalt or idealize the condition of infancy, which may be compensatory or part of an existential or spiritual contemplation of mortality. These forces continue to operate throughout toddlerhood. The second and third enumerated sources are salient in this regard because frustration of parental aims can now be deliberate as well as incidental, and because the toddlers' new horizons, which expand their range of demands, heighten the vulnerable parent's potential for feeling enslaved. These new horizons are opened on the one hand by basic maturational changes that adduce widening competence, and on the other hand by socialization pressures exerted by adults. The first have a great deal to do with inducing (through signals of readiness) the latter, and include abilities to walk and climb, to use words to communicate, and to use affects instrumentally toward desired ends. The latter cluster around parental emphases on cooperative, obedient, and increasingly extended interactions with others, including agemates.

#### COMPETENCE AND SOCIALIZATION

With the toddler's acquisitions of self-locomotion, verbal and intentional affect communication, and organized sustained social interactions with agemates, the adult's view of the child's status vis-a-vis others undergoes a powerful transition. This transition sees the gradual rise of parental expectations or demands, resting on two assumptions: that the toddler has a rudimentary capacity to comply; and that the child possesses a unified self-construct that is increasingly accessible verbally and in quasi-logical terms. These in turn foster new levels of expectation by the parent,

especially with respect to behavioral self-regulation.

### *Walking and Climbing*

In elaborating separation-individuation theory, Mahler made special mention of the impact of maturation on the separation-individuation process. The impact of walking, for example, he held to be the extension of the range of infant activity, bringing with it new domains to conquer. "The world is the toddler's oyster" became a catchphrase used to describe that expansion. The onset of rapprochement behavior was viewed largely as a response to the increased sense of separateness induced by the toddler's extended geographical forays. But the parental side of this separation experience has frequently been overlooked, even though it is a ubiquitous part of the developmental landscape.

The onset of walking delights parents, too; they spend a lot of time inducing this milestone, and the excitement of first steps, as many a home movie proves, is keen and mutual. But self-locomotion has other important results besides the impact of the specific sense of separateness it engenders. Walking and climbing increase the risk of injury to the child, thus heightening the parent's vigilance and precautionary (sometimes prohibitive) stance toward exploration. Walking and climbing also increase the chances of the child's getting into things that are forbidden but which have little to do with personal safety—valuables that might be broken or other people's possessions.

The toddlers' ability to walk, coupled with increasing weight and size, stimulates adults to carry them less; this, in turn, stimulates

many toddlers to cling. The regulation of physical contact between parents and young children has no precise course. Yet clinging is one form of contact maintenance that parents may actively resist for a variety of reasons, including the fostering of independence and the onset of sheer fatigue.

Toddlers sometimes cling in this period because of increasing external demands, sometimes against their inclinations, on their powers of locomotion. Some may come to resent their otherwise joyfully consummated walking skill if these demands exceed their capacity or their tolerance. There is little change in the child from previous phases in use of clinging to maintain contact. But maturation induces and expands opportunities and motives to use it as a way of altering the adult's behavior. In other words, to employ the ethological framework cited above (*Trivers, 1974*), the child's possibly coercive clinging is stimulated, not by an intrinsic sense of separateness (coming out of symbiosis), but by the extrinsic push toward self-reliant behavior. It has little or nothing to do with who is who (the individuation model) but very much to do with who does, or insists on, what. Persistent clinging by the toddler can therefore be experienced as tyrannical by the parent.

Walking and climbing can thus result in greater parental frustration and prohibition. If heavily taxed, parents may become hostile, introducing the problem of parental aggression in both direct and indirect forms.\*

Self-locomotion spawns widened geographical reaches which may in turn precipitate separation anxiety. They also elicit parental forms of behavior which, protec-

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\* Mahler drew attention to the darting behavior enabled by the toddler's walking and running, and found it significant of ambivalent wishes to flee the mother's engulfing potential and to be swept up by her. The descriptions she and her followers have made of this common "game" in toddlerhood imply that it arises as the toddler's own solution to the felt ambivalence. Setting aside the natural pleasure the game frequently affords toddlers and their parents, one wonders, in those cases where it has become compulsive, how much has been determined by the putative fusion-separateness dilemma and how much by a pre-established pattern of infant-parent interchange where parental aggression—direct or indirect—is a key factor in its genesis. Moreover, how much does the game derive from the familiar mother-led one of "Gonna getchu [get you]!" frequently instigated in the first year of the child's life?

tive as they may be from the parent's perspective, are either prohibitive or fearsome from the child's perspective. As climbing is added to the behavioral repertoire, parental remonstrance may increase in order to protect either the child or property, purposes which are beyond the child's understanding. The child's increasing capacity to remember locations of desired hidden objects compounds this situation, particularly since it may increase the toddler's demands. Hidden or out-of-reach objects include not only "things put away for now" (food, items that can only be used at special times, etc.) and dangerous or valuable items, but also those private things that the parent simply does not want the child to know about or use. Until consistent parameters are defined and enforced (whether benignly or aggressively) the toddler may continue to be insistent and therefore thwarted. Toddlers whine and coerce, then, largely as a function of parents' refusals and prohibitions.

#### *Verbal Communication*

Like walking, the period in which talking arises is special to both child and parent. The child's abilities to express and comprehend verbally portend a simpler future for matters of communication, particularly in the area of behavioral control. The self-control merits attention here, not so much from the standpoint of the child's actual capacity to exert it, but from the standpoint of the adult's expectation that the child is now (or is fast becoming) able to comply with verbal commands. How much simpler for the parent to be able to say "Stop that!" or "Don't do that!" than to have to use physical coercion. The onset of the infant's verbal capacities, then, can cause premature expectations of compliance based on verbal commands alone. Thus, the toddler is again in a precarious position vis-a-vis parental aggression.

#### *Affect as Communication*

When can the individual feign an affect state (or at least exaggerate an authentic affect state) for ulterior purposes? Are all attributions made by parents about their toddlers' manipulative abilities false? If not, how does one tell the difference? There is evidence that intentional communications by infants toward parents arise during the last quarter of the first year (Dore, 1983; Golnikoff, 1983a,b; Greenfield, 1980) and that intentional (*i.e.*, goal-directed) behavior of a social nature occurs as early as three months (Horner, 1985; Horner and Carlson, 1985). By toddlerhood there is a demonstrated capacity to manipulate communications to overcome passive or active resistance to a social intent (Golnikoff; Greenfield).

Klennert, Sorce, Emde, Sternberg, and Gaensbauer (1984) adduced significant convergent data from two surveys (one cross-sectional, one longitudinal) of mothers' perceptions of their infants' affect expression patterns over the first 18 months of life. At about nine months of age, a quarter of the mothers began to see their infants' expressions of anger as containing elements of willful aggression. Between 12 and 18 months, most mothers described what Klennert et al. termed a *surge of aggressiveness* in their children. Coordinately, the mothers reported behavior in themselves that paralleled that of the infant:

when the infant's expressions of anger changed so did the mother's behavior. Across all the ages, the primary cause which mothers reported for anger was frustration of wants or needs. Therefore, when infants cried angrily at three months of age, mothers' most frequently reported response was a sense of urgency to alleviate the cause or, if it could not be alleviated, to comfort the infants. But by the time infants had reached 12 months of age, the mothers' responses had shifted. Instead of hurrying to remove the frustration or meet the need, mothers reported that they most frequently distracted, ignored, or disciplined the infants. (Klennert et al., 1984, pp. 348-349)

The authors then speculated:



Presumably, the infants began to see their mothers as the source of frustration, while the mothers began to experience the infants as obstructive. Also of great import was the infants' increased capacity for goal-directed behavior, which allowed them to show their anger in a manner that was previously not possible. . . . [In] the anger system the babies' new instrumental skills put them into conflict with an environment that was heretofore primarily nurturant. By nature, the instrumental or intentional behaviors that characterize anger are aggressive acts, and as the aggression began to show itself, mothers initiated a deliberate socialization process by attempting to decrease or eliminate such emerging intentional behaviors. . . . *The nurtured partner suddenly turns the previously unfocused anger on the heretofore primarily nurturing partner, eliciting either patient restraint or outright anger!* (Klennert et al., 1984, p. 349, emphasis added)

The authors supposed that the described process was connected to the infant's increased feelings of separateness (p. 352). As much to the point, however, is the child's increasing sense of not prevailing in conflicts with the parent (perhaps conflicts previously settled in the child's favor), a sense that is likely to augment any level of pre-existing ambivalence.

Observations and reports such as those by Klennert et al. validate many parents' assertions that their toddlers attempt to manipulate them with affect states; and, indeed, the parent is likely to feel less able to manipulate the infant's affect states without resistance. Persistent children will make the adult feel pressed hard to yield and, thus, thwarted.

Consider whining, the vocal counterpart, and sometimes accompaniment, of clinging. It is a vocal signal of discomfort, often over an unfulfilled want; it is an insistent, often angry, demand. It is inevitable in the course of normal toddlerhood and, even without an operational definition, every parent and experienced child watcher recognizes it when it occurs. Whining is obviously used instrumentally by the older child to achieve desired ends, which include fulfillment of the original want or a palliative. Located on the continuum of fussiness,

whining has its developmental onset at just about the time that parents alter their responses to the angry or otherwise insistent demands made by the toddler at points of conflict. Those temper tantrums that do not belong to any predisposing condition of temperament probably originate then as well.

### *Social Interests and Skills*

Finally, the infant's expanding repertoire of social interests and skills, enhanced on the one hand by opportunities introduced by parents for contacts with agemates in various preschool and play-group settings, and on the other hand by the toddler's rapidly increasing competence to carry out cooperative interchanges with peers (Eckerman & Stein, 1982; Ross, Lollis & Elliott, 1982), opens up additional forces which gently but decisively dilute the toddler's direct involvements with the parent. Parents begin to present to the child (and gradually to enforce) paradigms of cooperation and altruism. These may coincide with or contradict the desired dynamics of other parents in the vicinity.

The self-directed activities and socially motivated pursuits of the toddler offer the parent tempting and enlarged respites from the ebb and flow of demands made by the toddler throughout the day, and from day to day. Satisfied with the personal opportunities afforded by such respites, the mother teeters at times on a fulcrum of divided interests and motives whose affective dynamics cannot be entirely missed by the increasingly affect-sensitive and social-referencing toddler (Clyman, Emde, Kempe, & Harmon, 1986; Klennert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svejda, 1983).

### REFOCUSING THE ISSUE

Rapprochement as a specific sequela of symbiosis conveys a misleading sense of toddlers' actual experiences of their caregiving worlds. Lacking a specifically transactional focus, the concept omits important

factors operating within the adult that affect infants and toddlers.

The utility of the rapprochement concept as a metaphor for describing and framing the specific conflicts, defensive maneuvers, and characterological dynamics of older children and adults is widely acknowledged. Rapprochement can be regarded as a useful fiction for establishing clinical-empathic links with personalities that have made alternating states of object closeness (usually hostile dependence) and distance (usually hostile rejection) their principal method of adjustment to the world of other people, or whose capacities for maintaining continuity of relationship are impaired.

In rejecting the theory of infantile symbiosis and omnipotence as a general framework for considering developmental phenomena, one need not abandon the possibility that transient subjective states that entail feeling merged with the other (quasi-symbiosis), feeling alone (loss of partner's investment), or feeling elated over mastery (quasi-omnipotence) are indeed within the range of affective capacities of infants and toddlers (Pine, 1985, 1986). Thus, the search for significant factors, perhaps even some that are etiologically central in severe personality disturbance, need not be shunted entirely away from the developmental period to which rapprochement refers. Nor is there any need to dismiss attempts to discover meanings in the ubiquitous behavior of toddlers: they *do* cling, they *do* coerce, they *do* oscillate between independence and dependence in ways often tyrannical to adults, their actions *do* frequently so exceed their comprehension as to seem motivated by a sense of omnipotence or magic, they *do* exalt themselves at moments of personal triumph and mastery, and they *do* protest and grieve their losses.

Transactional (or organizational) models have been used increasingly to conceptualize both the complexities of organism-milieu dynamics (Sameroff & Chandler, 1975) and the intricacies of interpersonal

dynamics (Cicchetti & Aber, 1986; Emde, Harmon & Good, 1986; Sander, 1975; Sroufe & Walters, 1977). It does not take sophisticated experimental paradigms to demonstrate the dynamics described in this presentation. Visits to public settings containing infants and toddlers, and unobtrusive observations of infants and parents in more intimate circumstances, generally provide ample opportunities to observe them.

Positive attachment relationships possess unique, intrinsically organized means to avoid many conflicts and to restore basic states of love and security when unavoidable conflicts arise. Withal, resistance and occasional hostility toward each other are natural features in the relationship of toddler and parent. Viewed from this standpoint, rapprochement is not a process of dealing with lost symbiotic bliss but a process of restoring positive equilibrium following perturbations in the relationship—a process of re-attaining basic love and security when frustrations and resistance, with their correlated affects, have been effectively dealt with. It is a process, then, that applies to infancy, toddlerhood, and all the stages of development thereafter.

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