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Loss of psycho-dynamics: The ability to give up - the ability to live

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The individual's ability to change has a significant impact on his ability to abandon the old: nothing new can be replaced unless the old can be given up. Processing abandonment and the loss is one of the main tasks of mental functioning. Even without the kind of current turbulence in our society, the individual life from the cradle to the grave is a surrender of the previous stage of development and the transition to the next. It appears, however, that the survival is now connected to the ability to change and thus the ability to deal with losses and let go. Such illusions, where an individual feels safe to belong to a specific company, city, country or nation, are falling apart, and the individual will need build the sense of safety increasingly upon his own ego.

The article presents an overview of the theory of Melanie Klein's studies, and it presents a theory of psychodynamics of loss from the point of view of the individual. (1.2). At the end of the writing the individual losses are compared to the collective losses and raises few well placed questions that remain unanswered.

The psychodynamics of loss according to Klein

When faced with the loss an individual has to go through a mental process, which is initially characterized by denial of the loss (Figure 1).

Denial is a feature that is characteristic also to the normal mourning, whenever the individual encounters a loss that is sizable enough. Denial no better than diminishing or invalidation does not help in promoting the processing of the loss and the healing of it. It is optimal to have an open confrontation with the loss and to survive the collapse. Severe losses ought not to be replaced by manic defense mechanisms, rather the individual should strive to mourn, in order to compensate and replace the damage done to normal and restore the situation in the process of healing. The pain of and caused by the process seems to be essential to the reality testing. According to Klein's view, this is how the links with the external world are recreated and re-established, even if the sensation of the loss of may continue. This mental reconstruction of the inner world, which takes place through help of the feeling of pain, there is a strong sensation as the inner world would be in danger of collapsing and corrupt. Like a child who during development seeks to set in place and to integrate the inner world, the grieving person is also going through the despair of mourning, where the inner world of recreated and re-integrated after the loss.

The depressive position described by Klein is referring to such a phase in the mental mental development of the child, which is characterized by integrative processes. Partial objects, i.e. the separate parts of the mother, such as the mouth, hands, chest, etc. are comprehended to belong into one and the same entity. In addition, good and evil are
being integrated in such a way that instead of perceiving two separate objects - a good mother, who gratifies, and the evil mother, who does not satisfy - the object will be considered good in one hand and evil, on the other hand. At that time, there begins to develop the guilt or shame about the feeling of rage, which is felt towards the unsatisfying bad object, when this evil object is understood as part of the both good and evil total object and a fear is born that by damaging ill, the good may also be damaged. As the result of that stage of development the child begins to produce new feelings such as empathy and a longing. The child develops a desire to correct and compensate for the object that the damage is believed to have caused to the as a consequence of the destructive impulses. Klein, along with many other theoreticians has observed this phase of the child’s mental development. Winnicott describes the same phenomenon by the term "capacity for concern" (3).

**Manic and Hypomanic Defense Mechanisms in processing of a loss**

Klein emphasizes the central role of the hypomanic defense mechanisms when processing a loss. To recourse to them is before all an escape of the psyche from depressive pain and grieving processes. Hypomanic defense mechanisms are particularly pronounced among the people who have not endured the losses. Omnipotence, denial, and idealization are the basic elements of the manic defense system. They protect not only the early Self against persecutors but also against the feelings of helplessness and painful dependency. Omnipotence is an illusion of perfectness. An omnipotent person is unable to meet his own inferiority and helplessness and unable to withstand the spectrum of this kind of feelings. Wrestling with the feelings of helplessness is probably essential for all the work of mourning, and the heart in the process of letting go is the defense of omnipotence. An object can also be considered omnipotent, and its loss may lead to exploration of substituting substances like alcohol or drugs.

Idealization is an illusion of excellence. It protects the Self, from the early persecutors. If the Self is complete and perfect, the destruction and collapse is not possible. Also an object can be idealized and the loss of the idealized object can be replaced by a sudden falling in love.

An important element of the defense system is denial: no loss never happened. Denial also includes management and control. Control can also be regarded as the voice of warning, and there may be a tendency to use the omnipotence and hyperactive denial as elements to control and manage persecution, so that injuring the Self will be prevented.

The control is based on the idea that evil is outside the Self, and that evil is prohibited from damaging the Self by controlling.

Split, dividing into two or splitting is internally linked with control. Helplessness, dependency and the sensation of loss will be split away of oneself, they are seen in others outside the Self and they are despised. Bold and audacious survive, the possibility of failure is been prohibited and is seen as an inferior quality. Helplessness will first be split away from oneself, it is attended to be seen in others and then to be controlled in others.
It is also possible that the object is seen as rejected. The sensation of loss will be split away from oneself and is provoked into others by continuing the rejection and by letting the damage to go around.

Ambivalence or ambiguity is closely related to splitting and control as relying on primitive defenses when protecting the Self. The pros and cons (good and bad object) may be present in mind at the same time, but in a non-integrated form. All the facets of the split start to approach each other. This is to prevent decision making in critical situations, because the different parts of the split can not be waived on and therefore, decisions can not be made. In the internal world, this means the defenses to be maintained. Normal grief process would begin, if helplessness and failure could be experienced as part of oneself.

The failure of the hypomanic defense mechanisms at this point leads the Self to face the fear of disintegration, and collapse. Thereafter the Self resorts to obsessive defense mechanisms, repeating the old patterns of routines again and again. It means a strong ambivalence, inconsistency, which prevents from making any solutions and prevents from giving up what already has apparently been doomed to fail.

Often the manic defense mechanisms are so closely linked with the obsessive-compulsive mechanisms that repair and re-creation do not succeed.

Triumphant (Triumpf) when felt together with the sense of loss is associated with the almighty power. One’s own hatred is targeted to the lost object. It involves sadism and a fear of sadism and accomplishing success and pursuit of profit. In the imagination one seeks to humiliate and torture others, which interferes with repair and re-creation.

Sadistic sense of superiority is connected to furious racing. By surviving one has achieved a kind of victory even over a dead person by staying alive. In the background there are often the wishes of death of parents or a sibling's death, which in a sense become "true." The feeling between sadness and anxiety is manic by nature. When anger at the lost arises, the faith in the lost is broken, and the process of normal grief is disrupted. Man begins to suspect that the loss has occurred only because he himself should be punished.

The desire to manage and control the lost can build such a so strong a barrier for repair that repairing is interrupted. In this case, the paranoid fears start to act, which activate the paranoid and hypomanic defense mechanisms. The repair is interrupted, and the ego turns into using the obsessive and hypomanic defense mechanisms.

Manic reparation is an escape into good and is a way to avoid the feelings of destruction and disintegration in depression. It is a way to avoid facing reality, and through this to avoid sorrow and reparation. In manic reparation the effort is to maintain the illusion of the lost reality by different unspecified and doubtful means.
A false correction happens in manic reparation. An example of this is, say, an alcoholic, coming home brought a bouquet: to correct something, but it is not what really has been damaged. By pseudo remunerations one is trying to fix the whole problem by correcting the sub-region.

Hypomaniac behavior is associated with emotional excellence, which consists of a sense of completeness (omnipotence), denial and controversy (ambivalence). The dark side will be cut off from oneself (spitting), and the uncertainty is placed (projected) elsewhere.

The sense of reality trampled on the ground and one is resorting to the superiority. An example of such a "masculine acting out" reaction, where masculine priorities, and valuation of phallic symbols and rising, and where the values of weakness, love or the lost reflect the move to the back burner. When the escape is forced against realities there is an escape to paranoid reaction, aimed at finding a scapegoat, and it prohibits the responsibility that belongs to oneself.

**The logic of the defence system**

Hypomanic defences are characterized by ignoring the small every day issues and ignorance of the details. The effort is to think "big" things and "large" units. This is how the goodness, fairness and realism is being crushed. When the collapse eventually happens it is strongly over-emphasized, because of its artificial delay. This in turn enhances the feelings of hopelessness, and the depth of the gap, it delays the reparation and makes the new construction difficult to begin.

Hypomaniac reparation is related to over-glorification and devaluation: It is magnificence of omnipotence against the fear of loss. The importance of small things and details are denied, and at the same time the possibility to repair is prohibited: the loss is so complete that it can not possibly be endured.

In manic transmission of caring the focus is to take care of oneself, in depressive of position it is transmitted to one another. When one moves into the normal acceptance in the processing of the loss, there is a change in the balance of the object relationship.

After loss of the whole Self must be re-created. When the hope returns, the change begins to happen in two kinds of emotions: the anxiety of destruction is reduced, and the longing of the lost is felt in full force. Hate will lessen, and love will increase. The destruction of anxiety fed by anger and hatred and it feeds hatred and anger.

With the help of manic and hypomaniac defense mechanisms one is protecting against the anxiety of destruction. When the anxiety and hatred is being reduced, the dependency is reduced and the need for sadistic protection wears off.

In working through the losses the work can be used to achieve wisdom, courage, ability to love, feelings, hope and joy, that coming from the integration of life values. It is more self-conscious and accepts the shortcomings of the Self as well as the self destructive
impulses. It provides much greater chances for sublimation, which happens after the real separation and detachment.

**Grief is a longing for good**

Longing for the lost is reflecting the dependence, which leads to repair. It is creative because it is guided by love. Such anxiety, which seeks to control the freedom of the object, is destructive. Concern about oneself at the moment of loss is destructive. When grief and despair are felt in full force, the love awakens, and the one who is grieving feels that the life inside and outside oneself is after all continuing. Mourning may turn into profitable values, increase creativity and depth of life experience. It may increase the well-known prestige to people, things, ideas, or even objects. It may simply make people wiser, as Jacques describes (4). All the unfortunate experiences of grieving do re-activate the working through all the losses and leads to greater internal integration of the soul.

When the severity of depression is hedged against by manic defenses the feelings of love are reduced and hatred increases. Internal evil objects are seen outside the Self. Veikko Tähkä has pictured forms of primitive ambivalence as a defense in facing the loss (5).

Grieving is re-setting the good objects into the inner world and is not possible, if a person as a child has been unable to internalize the good objects or feel security. By re-creating the inner world, which was threatened by disintegration and was in danger of perishing, one will experience greater sense of safety and will achieve harmony and peace.

**Collective loss**

Groups, large groups, collectives, and societies formed by people are more difficult to analyze and predict how the handling of the loss is taken care of than among the individuals. They seem to be going through similar defensive processes as individuals. Applications of Klein's thinking into groups and organizations have created among others Bion and Menzies-Lyth (6,7). The group to my understanding cannot react psychologically in any other way than what can be found in the psyche of its members. Yet, the old truth that the group is greater than the sum of its members, is certainly true.

Can one say that the group is different from the psychological components brought into it by its members? And where from would this response typical to groups but abnormal to individuals arise and appear into the group? If group members have passed the phase of the denial as the response in relation to common lost, can the collective group still react to the loss with denial?

The individual's inability to process the loss and abandonment is a very destructive to the individual himself. The inability of collectives, and organizations, to deal with their losses, is of course, at least as destructive to the community and its members, as is the individual's inability to deal with their losses is for the individual, if not all the more destructive.
Collective responses collective losses

The psychological processing of the collective loss in the Finnish economical life in the 90th followed amazingly accurately the hypomanic reactions described by Klein: the phase of denial lasted for a considerable time, and it was followed by a split: this happens to the neighbor - not to me. Paranoid reaction revealed particularly evident in the reactions of the trade unions, quite close to the trade union movement so far was to think that depression is a bluff invented by employers to keep wages in check.

Denial phase involved a lot of omnipotence of the Finnish mark value of the washing durability within the global market. With the help of manic reparation and masculine acting out- the illusion of welfare society was maintained for an amazingly long time, despite of the facts of the economic realities were clearly visible to all. As awareness of reality of the collapse eventually passed the common understanding, the hopelessness was strongly over-emphasized: this can not possibly be endured.

Similar emotional reactions in processing the grief followed by the sinking of the boat Estonia. Removing the fault by splitting, and thus transferring the possibility of occurrences of such accidents to the non-Finnish shoulders will secure the at least the Finns in the future of the threat of such a disaster. Occasionally, thoughts of the accident caused by appearance of the unused bombs in the Baltic Sea represented the paranoid reaction. Now the situation seems to have stuck in defense of control, which entitles an erection of security inspection and control system for the shipping companies operating so that they will inevitably turn into unprofitable.

One could see the omnipotence and the triumph in the fairy tales drawn up of the survivors and the perfection of the omnipotence, I think was represented a man-made technology. Although it just had sunk to the bottom of the sea for more than 800 people, however, it is able to move in deep waters with different videos and bear witness to human omnipotence against fear and threats of death. Here's how technology is able to protect us from all the painful feelings of helplessness, grief, loss and the recognition of one’s own mortality.

Questions without answers

According to Klein, the mental enduring from loss is the foundation of all mental activity. Psyche is a protection against those emotions of destruction that arise when the breast is not available. Fantasizing and maintaining the image of the lost is an immediate way to respond to (8). If the absent breast and satisfaction is still not to arrive, the mental defense against the threat of destruction will start. One could say that the whole evolution of psyche is hedging against the anxiety of destruction when the mother breast is not available, and that this is the cause for all mental functioning and mechanisms for its creation (Figure 2).

Is it possible to argue according to the diagram that the primitive defense mechanisms, depth of classification could be trapped in the following order: 1) denial, 2) split, 3)
idealization (good object is over idealized) and devaluation (bad object is devalued excessive evil) and 4), projective Identification, in which the subject is no longer to define either how the object is - good or bad - but rather to take an object to define themselves through asking questions, am I the eyes of the object good or bad.

This is followed by a paranoid-depressive reaction, in which the subject defines itself as an evil in the eyes of an object, or a manic reaction, in which the subject defines itself good in the eyes of the object. It places the evil outside the Self, and aims typically to manic or obsessive ways of reaction to 5) control of the evil outside the Self.

Interesting in the model described here is that the different ways of response patterns have a polar reversal inter conversion, turning as if a wheel around its axis. Movement on this axis seems be generated by the defense split resulting from a one-sided idea turning into its mirroring picture. We can have the example, where the movement of grandiose respond turns into paranoid response. We can think of it resulting from the overlap of two defense mechanisms in use simultaneously where in the result the subject defines itself through projective identification "in the eyes of an object", and at the same time through the defense “split” perceive themselves as bad in the paranoid route and good in the grandiose route of in the eyes of an object. Thus, variations between the two phases can be perceived as the shaft, which rotates polar around itself - or rather – turns into the mirrored picture of the prevailing feature. In due to the defense split the perception of oneself as "a good" turns into the perception of one self as "evil" and vice versa.

6) Such a link can be toughed out in the fluctuations between the manic and paranoid spaces, where Triumf-defense mechanism works as the axis for denial of destruction. The illusion that denies the destruction is produced by the defense split- that produces in paranoid phases an understanding of a total vulnerability of the Self and manic phases a complete idea of the mirror image – total denial of the possibility of destruction.

7) The nature of the defense ambivalence nature is interesting and problematic. It’s appearance in the obsessive-compulsive spaces is obvious. Taking a neurobiological starting point we can think that all sensory is generated in the first place as a result of an on-off-discrimination. Lehtonen, talks about his book on a similar fluctuations in cortical activity (9). Thus, ambivalence would be a very important phenomenon in the whole idea of the birth of the world of feelings and the sensory. Winnicott thinks that ambivalence is a defense more primitive than split and understands the split to be a defense created to protect the subject from the pain generated by ambivalence (3). Thus, a split would facilitate the identification and structuring by anchoring the idea to either or of the two polarities of ambivalence. This is also is in a way Klein thinks about when she says that omnipotence is to protect against ambivalence brought about by the feeling of helplessness.

The turning over the obsessive-compulsive phases into manic phases and vice versa is associated with increased ambivalence. With the help of the polar axis described earlier can be useful to think that the premises of the subject in a manic phases is omnipotent,
but instead in obsessive-compulsive phases there is premises of complete helpless at times. Helplessness, and its mirror image omnipotence would then be the key in the variations.  

Thomas Ogden describes ambivalence as an integrative force, which is as if a bridge to the gap of split and begins to form an integrated picture of the image of an object as good in one hand, and evil on the other (10). In this view the ambivalence is in a developed usage and so leaves the question of the place of ambivalence among primitive defenses to be unsolved.  

Defenses as their name suggests, are used to think as defenses of the ego. While functioning in the way described above they also can be perceived by functions of the mind, which are potentially replicable on the indelibly linked basis. If actions really take place based on logical chains following each other the, such as this article has attempted to outline, these formulas complying with the functions of the mind can be with reason nominated as mental structure.  

FURTHER READING  

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Captions:  
Figure 1 The graph shows the loss of psycho-dynamics. reinforced bar it describes the way in which all people have to walk the difficult loss of face. All the serious loss of the first denial, then the Defense and hypomanic depressive position through the transition to the normal grieving. An alternative is to choose pathological options: either a paranoid reaction to, or obsessive defense mechanisms. Figure 2 Possible to argue that the primitive defense mechanisms could be trapped in this order:  
1) denial,  
2) a split,  
3) idealisaatio and devaluaatio,  
4), Projective Identification,  
5) control,  
6) and Triumf  
7) ambivalence.  


