

**Individuation and Narcissism: The Psychology of Self in Jung and Kohut. Mario Jacoby. Routledge. 1990. ISBN 0-4-15-06464-3.**

A plea for tolerance between different analytic schools begins this book that examines the parallels and conjunctions between the ideas of Jung and Kohut on narcissism and the self. Jacoby clearly has a talent for synthesis, for finding commonalities between different schools of thought and trusting that something productive might emerge from the conflict between ideas. There is a trust that comparison can be productive in revealing different aspects of a whole and allowing one viewpoint to illuminate another and to expose the shadows.

This ability to synthesise gets us away from any business of omnipotent identification with one realm of thought as having all the answers or being inherently better or superior, perhaps even, at the extreme, disqualifying other ways of thinking, seeing, and being. Jacoby thus avoids any tendency to assert the superiority of Jungian ideas and he is able to respectfully examine Kohut's approach and other approaches for their potential value and meaning. He convinces us that recent developments in psychoanalysis, starting with Winnicott, have led to a meeting with aspects of the Jungian tradition.

The book begins with an examination of the myth of Narcissus, first examining Ovid's tale then describing other versions of the story to the present day. Jungian interpretations are then outlined based on the understanding that myth displays the behaviour of the unconscious or represents a statement by the psyche about itself, and may also contain universal statements about aspects of psychic reality. A discussion of Freud's paper "On Narcissism" familiarises us with psychoanalytic ideas about narcissism and the early differences between Freud and Jung on this issue. The main theme of this section, the undifferentiated fusion of self and other, leads us into the next section on ideas about "the self" in Jungian psychology and Kohut's self psychology. Jacoby's view is that questions about the self are

also questions about the essence of human nature, the question “What am I that I love?”

The remainder of the book looks at conceptualisations about and characteristics of narcissism. Jacoby discusses various ways of understanding narcissistic states: as a developmental stage, as a mode of relating, or as a synonym for self-esteem. His own initial position is that narcissism can have healthy or unhealthy aspects depending on the state of maturation of the individual personality and he feels that narcissistic forces can have their own capacity to fuel development and healthy maturation, a process described by the term individuation in Jungian theory. He reminds us that narcissistic traits and forces may not always be indicative of pathology or disturbance and he outlines the goals of healthy narcissistic maturation leading to qualities such as the development of empathy, creativeness and humour, as well as examining various forms of narcissistic disturbance. This way of approaching the issue used health to illuminate illness and to place disturbance within a framework of development.

There is a general understanding in the literature that the narcissistically disturbed patient requires careful management in therapy and the final section of this book looks at this issue.