

You

Attachment theorists say that all people seek attachments in infancy. When mother leaves the infant alone the infant will experience a rupture and will feel distressed. How do these ideas jibe with the following theories about the potentially creative infant?

"[Philip Weismann] believed that the future artist, as an infant, had the ability to hallucinate the mother's breast independently of oral needs. According to him the unusual capacities of the artist 'may be traced to the infancy and childhood of the artist wherein we find that he is drawn by the nature of his artistic endowment to preserve (or immortalize) his hallucinated response to the mother's breast independent of his needs gratifications" One major concept of Weismann is the 'dissociative function of the ego' that he substitutes for Kris's concept of regression in the service of the ego. With the aid of this dissociative function, the creative person 'may partially decahctect [withdraw his emotional investment in] the external object (mother's breast) and hypercahctect [hyper-invest] his imaginative perception of it. He may then further elaborate and synthesize these self-created perceptions as anlagen or precursors of creative activity which must then await full maturation and development of his ego and his talent for true creative expression.' In simple words, according to Weismann, the child who will become creative has the ability to diverge the energy originally invested in primitive personal objects and to invest it again in creative work."

ChatGPT

Attachment theory and the theories proposed by Philip Weismann regarding the potentially creative infant offer differing perspectives on early development and the formation of attachments.

Attachment theory, as formulated by John Bowlby, suggests that infants have an innate drive to seek attachment to a primary caregiver, usually the

mother. The separation from the caregiver can cause distress and anxiety in the infant, leading to behaviors such as crying and seeking proximity to the caregiver upon their return. This theory emphasizes the importance of secure attachment for healthy emotional and social development.

On the other hand, Philip Weismann's theories propose a different perspective, particularly regarding the potential creative capacities of infants. Weismann suggests that infants, specifically those who will later become artists, possess unique abilities even in infancy. He suggests that these infants have the capacity to hallucinate the mother's breast independently of their immediate oral needs. This ability to hallucinate suggests a form of early creativity or imagination that is distinct from basic attachment behaviors.

Weismann introduces the concept of the "dissociative function of the ego," which he believes enables the creative individual to partially detach from external objects, such as the mother's breast, and hyper-focus on their imaginative perceptions. This dissociation allows the creative person to invest energy in creative endeavors rather than solely in satisfying immediate needs. According to Weismann, this early divergence of energy toward imaginative perceptions serves as a precursor to later creative expression.

In essence, while attachment theory emphasizes the importance of secure attachment for emotional development, Weismann's theories suggest that certain individuals, particularly those with creative potential, may demonstrate early signs of divergent thinking and imaginative capacities that contribute to their later creative endeavors. These perspectives offer complementary rather than conflicting views on early development and the formation of attachments.

G

You

So the potentially creative infant has a coping mechanism in his imaginative abilities?

ChatGPT

Yes, that's one way to interpret it. Weismann's theories suggest that infants who later demonstrate creative potential may utilize their imaginative abilities as a coping mechanism or as a way to channel their energy and attention away from immediate needs towards creative endeavors. This imaginative capacity allows them to dissociate from external objects, such as the mother's breast, and invest their energy in creative thought processes. In this view, creativity emerges as a form of coping or adaptation to early experiences, potentially serving as a means of processing emotions or stimuli in a unique and creative manner.

G

You

The adult artist transforms his pain into creative productions. Think of Mahler's anguished tenth symphony, both a reflection of Mahler's emotional struggles at the time but also a transformation of those emotional struggles into creative production. In a far simpler way, the potentially creative infant transforms the pain of mother's absence into imaginative "thoughts."

ChatGPT

Yes, that's an insightful way to look at it. Much like how adult artists may channel their emotional struggles and pain into their creative works, the

potentially creative infant, according to Weismann's theories, may also transform their experiences, such as the pain of the mother's absence, into imaginative thoughts and perceptions. This transformation process could serve as a coping mechanism, allowing the infant to deal with distressing experiences in a creative and potentially constructive manner. Through this lens, creativity becomes not only a means of expression but also a way of processing and transforming emotions and experiences from an early age.

G

You

Somewhat related to this idea is Hanna Segal's belief that all creativity emerges out of loss. "It is when the world within us is destroyed, when it is dead and loveless, when our loved ones are in fragments, and we ourselves in helpless despair – it is then that we must recreate our world anew, reassemble the pieces, infuse life into dead fragments, recreate life."

It is when mother has left me in the crib alone, my world is destroyed, my world is dead and loveless, my loved mother is in fragments, and I am in helpless despair – but it is then that I recreate my world anew, reassemble the pieces, infuse life into dead fragments, recreate life -- through my capacity to imagine.

ChatGPT

Absolutely, Hanna Segal's perspective resonates strongly with the notion that creativity often emerges from experiences of loss or emotional struggle. In the context of infancy and attachment, the absence or perceived loss of the mother, even if temporary, can indeed evoke feelings of despair and fragmentation in the infant's world.

In these moments of perceived loss or emotional turmoil, the infant's capacity to imagine and create internal representations becomes a crucial mechanism for coping and reconstruction. Through imaginative processes,

the infant may begin to reassemble the pieces of their emotional world, infusing life into what feels dead or fragmented. This act of recreation through imagination mirrors Segal's idea of rebuilding and infusing life into a world that feels destroyed or loveless.

In this light, creativity in infancy becomes not only a means of coping with distress but also a powerful tool for resilience and transformation. Through imagination, the infant has the ability to recreate their inner world, finding solace and meaning even in moments of perceived loss or despair.

G

You

I am reminded of the concept of creative non-attachment.

"Recently Sahdra et al. (2010) studied the Buddhist construct of "nonattachment," characterized by a profound awareness about the impermanence and interdependence of all the phenomena. The concept of nonattachment implies an absence of fixation on ideas, images or objects, mental independency and genuine interest in other people. Contrarily to what we could expect, nonattachment is not an apathetic detachment from the world; it involves instead a responsive and caring involvement in the present situation (Sahdra et al., 2010). Nonattachment implies an absolute capability of happiness, in spite of external conditions, as it means being able to let go of psychological strategies that support afflictive emotions. Sahdra et al. (2010) found some similarities between the Buddhist concept of nonattachment and the Western construct of secure attachment: both imply autonomy and sincere concern for others (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), but secure attachment is based on mental representations related to security, whereas nonattachment is based on insight into the impermanent nature of mental representations. The constructs of nonattachment and creativity have also some similarities as both imply mental flexibility (release from mental fixations), capacity to transcend informational limits (see Horan, 2009), radical self-reliance, and they seem both related to the

generosity principle (Hedeen & Kelly, 2009), that involves gifting, self-expression, and disentanglement from the external constrictions. Can we say that the potentially creative infant in mother's absence is able to show "radical self-reliance?"

Please discuss expansively and in detail.

ChatGPT

Certainly! The concept of creative non-attachment, as described by Sahdra et al. (2010), draws parallels between Buddhist principles of non-attachment and Western constructs such as secure attachment and creativity. Non-attachment, characterized by an awareness of impermanence and interdependence, suggests an absence of fixation on ideas, images, or objects, along with a genuine interest in others. It entails a responsive and caring involvement in the present moment, rather than apathetic detachment.

In the context of the potentially creative infant experiencing the absence of the mother, we can explore how this notion of non-attachment manifests and evolves:

1. **Radical Self-Reliance:** When the infant is left alone, they are confronted with the task of soothing themselves and navigating their internal world without immediate external support. This situation fosters a sense of self-reliance as the infant learns to regulate their emotions and create their own internal sense of security. This process can be seen as "radical" because it requires the infant to rely solely on their own internal resources and capacities.
2. **Mental Flexibility and Release from Fixations:** In the absence of the mother, the infant may engage in imaginative processes to cope with the distress of separation. This imaginative capacity reflects a mental flexibility, allowing the infant to transcend fixations on the immediate presence of the mother and explore alternative ways of

soothing themselves. By releasing fixation on the external object (the mother), the infant demonstrates an early form of non-attachment to specific mental representations.

3. **Capacity to Transcend Informational Limits:** The infant's imaginative responses to the absence of the mother suggest a capacity to transcend informational limits imposed by their immediate environment. Instead of being constrained by the absence of the mother, the infant engages in creative thought processes that expand their understanding of the world and their own emotional experiences.
4. **Generosity Principle and Disentanglement:** The principles of generosity, self-expression, and disentanglement from external constrictions, as described by Hedeem & Kelly (2009), resonate with the infant's imaginative responses to separation. Through imaginative play and creative expression, the infant demonstrates a willingness to engage with their inner world and disentangle themselves from external constraints, such as the physical absence of the mother.

In summary, the potentially creative infant in the absence of the mother exhibits qualities of radical self-reliance by tapping into their internal resources to cope with distress. Their imaginative responses reflect mental flexibility, a capacity to transcend informational limits, and an early form of non-attachment to specific mental representations. Through creative expression, the infant engages with the principles of generosity and disentanglement, demonstrating a proactive and resilient approach to navigating their emotional world.

G

You

One final note. I am reminded of the observations of the writer Andre Aciman who talks about going to a dinner party and socializing (a derivative of the infant's early attachment with mother), but, at the same

time, eagerly anticipating getting back to his solitary writing desk at home to work on a creative transformation (unattached to real persons) of his social interactions (attachments) with real human beings.

Could you discuss Aciman's observations in the context of the material I have presented in this chat.

Here is what Aciman writes: "The ideal thing for a writer is when he has written all day — with minor interruptions thrown in — but, like some latter-day Nick Carraway, needs to head out to a dinner party. He doesn't want to lose his momentum, but he's also eager to meet friends at the dinner. Half-way through dinner, though, he can't wait to get back. Yes, company is always fun, but how utterly fantastic to get back before midnight, and pick up exactly where he left off at seven. Something someone said that evening caught his attention. He'll use it in the novel he is writing."

ChatGPT

Andre Aciman's observations provide a fascinating perspective on the interplay between social interaction and solitary creative work, which can be analyzed in the context of the themes discussed earlier regarding attachment, creativity, and nonattachment.

When Aciman describes the writer's experience of attending a dinner party and then returning eagerly to his solitary writing desk, he highlights a dynamic tension between attachment to social interactions and the need for creative solitude. This tension mirrors the infant's early experiences of attachment to the mother contrasted with the potential for imaginative independence.

At the dinner party, the writer engages in socializing, which can be seen as a derivative of the infant's early attachment experiences with the mother. Social interaction satisfies a basic human need for connection and belonging, akin to the infant seeking proximity and comfort from the caregiver. However, Aciman suggests that the writer's attachment to social

interaction is not absolute; there is a simultaneous pull towards solitary creative work.

This duality echoes the concept of nonattachment discussed earlier, which involves a profound awareness of impermanence and interdependence, as well as the ability to let go of psychological strategies that support afflictive emotions. In Aciman's scenario, the writer demonstrates a form of nonattachment by being able to engage in social interactions without becoming fixated or overly attached to them. He is responsive and present in the moment but does not cling to the experience or become dependent on it for his well-being.

Furthermore, Aciman's description of the writer's eagerness to return to his solitary writing desk underscores the concept of radical self-reliance. Despite enjoying the company of others, the writer finds fulfillment and satisfaction in his creative work, demonstrating autonomy and independence of mind. This echoes the idea of nonattachment as the ability to find happiness and fulfillment internally, regardless of external conditions.

In the context of the potentially creative infant, Aciman's observations suggest that the capacity for radical self-reliance and nonattachment may manifest early in life, laying the groundwork for later creative endeavors. Just as the writer finds inspiration in social interactions but ultimately returns to his solitary creative pursuit, the infant may experience moments of attachment and separation but ultimately relies on internal imaginative capacities to navigate and make sense of their experiences.

In summary, Aciman's reflections provide a nuanced exploration of the relationship between attachment, creativity, and nonattachment, highlighting the dynamic interplay between social interaction and solitary creative work and suggesting parallels between adult experiences and early developmental processes.

.

G

You

In a study of architects MacKinnon found that the least creative showed the following characteristics seemingly associated with secure attachment: abasement, affiliation, and deference (socialization); their goal was to meet the standard of the group (i.e., the attachment figure). MacKinnon, D.W. "Personality and the Realization of Creative Potential." *American Psychologist* 20: 273-81, 1965. The most creative architects scored highest on aggression, autonomy (independence), psychological complexity and richness, and ego strength (will); their goal was found to be "some inner artistic standard of excellence." Cattell found that high ego strength (found in creative persons) was associated with being self-reliant, solitary, resourceful, individualistic, and self-sufficient: characteristics seemingly associated with insecure attachment. In creative persons are the characteristics of aggression, autonomy, psychological complexity and richness and ego strength associated with insecure attachment? How does attachment theory reconcile the fact that although attachment is biologically-driven, the emotional detachment associated with insecure attachment — with its consequent promotion of unusual autonomy and creativity — has survival value for the group?

ChatGPT

The findings from MacKinnon's study on architects highlight an interesting contrast between characteristics associated with secure attachment and those associated with creative potential. While individuals with characteristics seemingly associated with secure attachment (such as abasement, affiliation, and deference) may strive to meet the standards of the group, those with characteristics associated with creative potential (such as aggression, autonomy, psychological complexity, and ego strength) often pursue inner standards of excellence.

Cattell's findings further underscore this contrast by associating high ego strength, a trait commonly found in creative individuals, with characteristics

typically associated with insecure attachment, such as self-reliance, solitary behavior, resourcefulness, individualism, and self-sufficiency.

This raises the question: How do attachment theory and the promotion of creative potential through characteristics associated with insecure attachment reconcile?

Attachment theory proposes that attachment is biologically driven and serves an adaptive function, promoting survival and emotional security by fostering proximity and protection from caregivers. However, it also acknowledges that individuals may develop different attachment styles based on their early caregiving experiences. While secure attachment is associated with a sense of safety and trust in relationships, insecure attachment can manifest in various forms, including avoidant or anxious attachment styles.

In the context of creativity, individuals with characteristics associated with insecure attachment, such as autonomy and self-reliance, may exhibit behaviors that diverge from social norms and group standards. This divergence can lead to the pursuit of inner standards of excellence and the exploration of unconventional ideas and perspectives.

From a survival perspective, this detachment from group standards and promotion of autonomy and creativity can be advantageous for the group as a whole. Creative individuals may contribute novel ideas, solutions, and perspectives that benefit the group's adaptation to changing environments and challenges. Their ability to think independently and take risks can foster innovation and progress within the group.

In essence, attachment theory suggests that while attachment behaviors are biologically driven and serve important adaptive functions, the promotion of creativity through characteristics associated with insecure attachment reflects a complex interplay between individual temperament, early experiences, and societal influences. Detachment from social norms and group standards, characteristic of insecure attachment, can promote autonomy and creativity, which in turn may have survival value for the group by fostering innovation and adaptation.

G

You

It is important to keep in mind, as Stephen Jay Gould (1981) has pointed out, that natural selection may produce a feature for one adaptive reason (e.g., the drive for attachment which promotes infant survival and group cooperation in adulthood). However this may have a number of potentially “non-adaptive sequelae” – such as the compromising of individual identity in the drive for group cohesion, the loss of rationality and the development of “group think”, and the scapegoating of creative outsiders who pose a threat to group cohesion. In short, there is no guarantee that all features of biology are adaptive. Another example: African populations who moved to Europe eons ago lost their skin pigmentation that allowed these European populations to more easily absorb vitamin D at higher latitudes. With that biological advantage there arose a disadvantage: the greater risk for skin cancers in these northern populations. We should emphasize that individuals who do not conform to biological imperative (e.g., persons with insecure attachment) may have qualities that prove to be biologically adaptive for the group (such as, heightened autonomy, which promotes novel problem-solving skills that have survival value for the group).

ChatGPT

Stephen Jay Gould's insights are crucial for understanding the complexities of biological adaptations and their potential consequences. While certain features may initially evolve for specific adaptive reasons, they can also lead to unintended or "non-adaptive sequelae," as Gould described them.

In the context of attachment theory and its implications for individual and group behavior, Gould's observations offer valuable perspectives. Attachment behaviors, such as the drive for attachment in infancy and the promotion of group cooperation in adulthood, may indeed have evolved as adaptive mechanisms to ensure infant survival and enhance group cohesion.

However, as Gould points out, there can be unintended consequences or trade-offs associated with these adaptations. For example, the drive for group cohesion may sometimes compromise individual identity, leading to conformity and the suppression of dissenting viewpoints (a phenomenon known as "groupthink"). Additionally, creative individuals who deviate from group norms may be scapegoated or marginalized, despite their potential contributions to group adaptation and innovation.

Moreover, Gould's example of African populations losing skin pigmentation upon migration to Europe highlights how adaptations can lead to both advantages and disadvantages in different environmental contexts. While the loss of pigmentation allowed for better absorption of vitamin D at higher latitudes, it also increased the risk of skin cancers in these populations.

In the context of attachment styles, individuals who do not conform to the biological imperative of secure attachment may possess qualities that prove to be biologically adaptive for the group, as Gould suggests. For example, individuals with insecure attachment may exhibit heightened autonomy and independence, which can promote novel problem-solving skills and innovation, ultimately benefiting the group's survival and adaptation.

In summary, Gould's insights caution against simplistic interpretations of biological adaptations and emphasize the importance of considering the broader ecological and social contexts in which they arise. Attachment behaviors, while initially adaptive, can have complex consequences for individual and group behavior, and understanding these nuances is essential for a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and evolution.

G

You

A creativity scale developed for the MMPI assesses elevated Social Discomfort (SOD) as a criterion for creativity. Social discomfort would be associated with insecure attachment. Could you discuss the implications of this with respect to the material I submitted in this chat? Please be detailed and expansive.

A creativity scale was developed for the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Indicator, 2nd edition (MMPI-2). A criterion-based, contrasting group strategy was implemented using the Creative Behavior Inventory (CBI; Hocevar, Citation1979) to define high versus low creative groups. Two-thirds of the valid 192 data sets were randomly selected to identify the MMPI-2 items included for consideration in the creativity (C) scale. The remaining third of the sample served to determine the psychometric properties of the 31 item C scale, which was found to have adequate discriminant ability and reliability. MMPI-2 scales with significant correlations to the C scale were Scale 4, Scale 5, Scale 9, and Scale O; as well as GF, MAC-R, ES, and SOD.

ChatGPT

The development of a creativity scale for the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, 2nd edition (MMPI-2) that assesses elevated Social Discomfort (SOD) as a criterion for creativity carries important implications, especially when considering the material previously discussed regarding attachment theory, creative potential, and psychological traits associated with attachment styles.

Attachment theory suggests that early attachment experiences influence the development of social and interpersonal behaviors throughout life. Secure attachment is typically associated with feelings of comfort and security in relationships, while insecure attachment may manifest in various forms, including social discomfort and difficulty in navigating social interactions.

The finding that elevated Social Discomfort (SOD) is associated with creativity on the MMPI-2 creativity scale suggests a potential link between insecure attachment and certain aspects of creative behavior. Individuals who experience social discomfort may exhibit traits commonly associated with insecure attachment, such as heightened autonomy, independence, and a tendency to diverge from group norms.

This association between social discomfort and creativity aligns with previous research findings suggesting that creative individuals often display nonconformist tendencies and may feel socially marginalized or uncomfortable in conventional social settings. From an attachment perspective, this could be interpreted as individuals with insecure attachment styles exhibiting behaviors that diverge from social norms and expectations, allowing for greater autonomy and creative expression.

Moreover, the MMPI-2 creativity scale's correlation with other MMPI-2 scales, such as Scale 4 (Psychopathic Deviate), Scale 5 (Masculinity-Femininity), Scale 9 (Hypomania), and Scale O (Overcontrolled Hostility), as well as GF (General Maladjustment), MAC-R (MacAndrew Alcoholism Scale-Revised), ES (Ego Strength), suggests a complex interplay between various psychological traits and creative potential.

For instance, traits associated with hypomania, such as elevated mood, increased energy, and impulsivity, may contribute to bursts of creative inspiration and innovation. Similarly, overcontrolled hostility may reflect internal conflicts and frustrations that drive creative individuals to express themselves through alternative means, such as art or literature.

Overall, the development of a creativity scale for the MMPI-2 that includes elevated Social Discomfort as a criterion underscores the multifaceted nature of creativity and its potential links to attachment styles and other psychological traits. Further research exploring the relationships between attachment, social discomfort, and creativity could provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of individual differences in creative expression.