

Personality disorders in the light of Kernberger's theory

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The paper presents that part of Kernberg's theory that applies to severe personality disorders (i.e. disorders which are classified as lower borderline organisation of personality). In order to understand these disorders, it is necessary to be familiar with normal personality development, so the author first enumerates the characteristics and processes involved in a normal formation of personality and also calls attention to fixation and regression at certain phases of this development, leading to personality disorders. The paper then presents a borderline personality organization and the role of aggression and pathological fixation of identity, in particular in connection with antisocial personality disorder and the syndrome of malignant narcissism.

Antisocial personality disorder is characterised by the inability to feel guilt, to take care of oneself or other people, an inability to identify with moral or ethical values and an inability to envisage one's own future. What is equally typical for people with this disorder, is their inability to make non-exploitative investment in important others. In malignant narcissism, there is certain capacity to trust other people as well as a capacity to experience authentic feelings of guilt but, on the other hand, such a person typically manifests aggression in whatever form that gives satisfaction. It is all connected with cruelty, sadism or hate.

Key words: personality development, personality disorders, antisocial personality disorders

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