

Desperate Greed: The Plight of an Object

Shailesh Kapadia

In this paper I plan to discuss a particular type of greed which I shall call “desperate greed”. What I mean by this term will emerge as I proceed to describe a woman patient of mine. By presenting clinical material from her analysis, I plan to show that underlying this type of greed was a complex mental structure which employed projective and introjective identifications and splitting mechanisms. This structure helped the patient to achieve a precarious psychic balance. I say precarious because I feel that any shift from this position would have thrown her into either facing a mental breakdown on one hand or facing an unbearable guilt on the other. From the clinical material I shall draw a few conclusions about this type of structure. I shall then present the only dream this patient brought in at the end of a three and a half years old analysis, which indicated, to my mind, a slight but significant change.

Finally, I shall end the paper by briefly comparing this “desperately greedy” state with the pathological organisations used by some patients.

I shall begin by describing the patient and the impression she created on my mind. She came to consult me without prior appointment demanding that I see her immediately. She made out that she was dying when I gave her a time for the next day. When she came the next day she began by saying that she felt disgusted both with herself and the treatment – which she did not know why she had come to see me. Psychoanalysis was such a tediously long process and she was a fool to have sought it.

I soon learnt that this was for her a daily experience. Over the next few months I began to know more about her. A picture emerged in my mind of an extremely greedy person who was constantly frustrated. This frustration was desperate in nature. If she did not get what she wanted she was going to die. If she did get it she was still going to die because she was so disappointed. Immediately she began to want something else.

Thus she remained perpetually in a state of want. It is this state of perpetual want that I shall call a state of “desperate greed”. Greedily she wanted things and regardless of whether she got them or not she remained desperate. She was rich enough to get almost everything she desired. Yet, she led a rather lonely, monotonous life. She had a few relationships, which she experienced in identical, frustrating way. Due to her frustration she appeared to be always on the run, engaged in frantic activities. Yet, underneath she remained deadly passive.

A mother of two sons, she was an attractive twenty-eight years old woman. She herself had no money of her own but a very wealthy husband apparently gave her any amount she wanted. In the initial months she only talked about buying a variety of goods. These ranged from worthless trinkets to antique jewellery and saris worth thousands of rupees. There was no discrimination whatsoever in her purchases. She felt equally desperate before buying any of them. Her message to me was always the same; she was going to die if she did not get it.

As soon as she bought these things her mind changed. She felt the whole exercise was pointless and disappointing. It did not give her the kind of pleasure or satisfaction that she had expected. In fact now she felt ashamed and guilty. She spoke of guilt at length but could never actually tell me what it was about. My feeling was that she did not use the word “guilt” in the objected related sense. It was not a feeling of harm done to anybody or of having wasted money. It was a sort of a persecutory sensation, which she felt stuck with and which she could not get rid of. However, she always described it as unbearable. The sense of shame was more clearly defined. She felt that she, a woman of high intellectual achievements – she was an M.A. in philosophy and had once been a lecturer in Bombay University – had come down to a vulgar level of an aimless, wealthy housewife. These feelings of shame and guilt were often so acute that she refused to unpack the goods that she bought. There were stories of cupboard-ful of leather bags and expensive saris that never got looked at again, let alone be used.

She experienced all this in the transference. She came to the sessions and immediately talked about stopping analysis because it disappointed her. She wanted my interpretations in the same desperate way as she wanted material things but when I

spoke she felt, “is that all?” as if, she had been expecting something quite different. My interpretations always disappointed her. Invariably they failed to give her the kind of gratification she had in mind. Due to this her analysis was always in a danger of termination. There was hardly any session in which she did not consider termination. After she left she did not even remember what I had said. Like her unopened packages my interpretations were tucked away somewhere never to be used.

In my countertransference I felt totally devalued. I had a feeling of being used and wasted. I felt constantly frustrated and angry. At the same time I could see that the patient was not in a manic state. If I was worthless then so was she. In no way did she feel superior to me. Never did I see a trace of arrogance or inflation in her. In fact, both of us were in the same boat. Her sessions left me exhausted. This was because she always spoke very emphatically in screeches and screams. Also, she spoke voluminously. It was difficult to keep pace with her. After she left, I felt I needed rest.

Clinical Material

The patient whom I shall call A is the second of four children. The eldest is a girl, after the patient there is a boy and a younger girl. I have no knowledge of the age differences except that the youngest sister is eight years younger than A. All the members of the family pride themselves on being very fair and good looking. A believes that her birth was a disappointment to her parents who had expected a boy. They were also very unhappy because she was so dark. A said that her parents took no trouble to hide their disappointment.

The relationship between the parents appears to be highly disturbed. They were residents of a neighbouring country where the father had amassed a large fortune but from which they had to flee to avoid arrest for various crimes, and take up asylum in India. The father emerges in my mind as a psychopathic personality. He maintains a legitimate business as a front. He has kept out of jail by regularly bribing the police. He has affairs with his secretaries and telephone operators. A feels that her mother pushes him into these affairs by her perverse behaviour. These affairs result in violent fights

between the parents in which the father beats up the mother. The mother uses this fact to make the father feel guilty so that he coughs up a lot of money with which she buys jewellery.

At the end of these fights the mother phones A. These phone calls have a perverse significance for my patient. They last for at least two to three hours. They begin with the mother crying in distress but quickly change into some sort of a sado-masochistic excitement. A cannot put the phone down. When she finally does, she feels totally depleted and has to go to sleep immediately.

A has friend called B with whom she has exactly the same relationship as with the mother. With B too she talks on the phone for hours. During these phone calls A simply listens to the detailed descriptions of B's perverse life which closely resembles that of her mother.

A's entire life is managed by a maid who has to organise and run the house because A spends most of her time in bed or on the phone. With this maid A behaves like a baby making her brush her teeth, gGive her a bath etc. A projects all her active parts in this maid. She is equally dependent on her husband. He provides her with all the money she needs. He seems to be very concerned about her mental health. A, however, feels both these as persecutors. She says that they are very greedy people. The maid wants higher and higher salary, the husband wants sex all the time and both of them want power over her.

The clinical material I am presenting is from the time I resumed after my last summer holidays. A did not come for the first three sessions. She arrived on Thursday and began talking in her usual way – very fast in a frantic scream-like tone, which uniformly exhausts me.

She said that she had not come all these days because, after a difficult struggle, she had finally decided to appear for her second M.A. exams. She was not going to come the next day i.e. Friday and also the following Monday because she had two more papers to give. All this was said in a defiant manner. Then her tone became increasingly frenzied. She said that she had so much trouble coming today! She wasn't going to come at all...such a mad rush...chhee...e...e and she had to get dressed up and how to come

and all those crowds in the train... people jostling. No, no, no. No way can she come. It was so disgusting and the only reason she had come today was to tell me that she won't come from the first of the next month.

I felt a great rush of this “chhee...e...e... and no...no...no and so dirty...” etc. The kind of disgust she expressed cannot be put into words. I realised that I had become totally bad. I know from experience that at such times any interpretation I give becomes an argument. She feels that I am persuading her to continue analysis. This is very comfortable for her but then the session becomes completely useless. Hence I remained silent.

She then said that she had been tremendously happy while I was away. She had found a simple method. She had decided to accept all the things that disturbed her and not mind. She needed her husband's money but minded his power hunger. She had decided that she would not mind it anymore. She would give him sex as and when he wanted it. She had talked on the phone for hours with both, her mother and B. She had felt no guilt afterwards because she had accepted their kind of life. She had done all that these two wanted – involved herself in all their things. She had often met her father too and had listened to all his nonsense. I should see how her parents now showed her great respect and love. After all, these were the two things that she had always wanted. Both of them were now talking of how good she was and that how they were going to get her this and that. Her old maid had left her but she had managed to get a new one exactly identical to the old one. Of course, she too demanded a lot of money. She too was greedy but that did not matter. After all, she (i.e. A) had ample money. Really, she had no problems at all. She suffered from none of her usual torturous feelings of shame and guilt. So now why should she come for analysis?. It was such a trouble to come! Such heat outside and the taxi drivers making such a fuss! How terrible...chhee...ee...e. She was definitely not coming from the first of next month.

She then said that I was her biggest problem because, no doubt, while she was here she would think a little. Now that she had no shame or guilt, there was nothing left to bring her here. Those were the only problems and she was bound to feel those damned things once she started coming. Problems were no longer problems, she said.

I pointed out that the “problemness” of her problems was in feeling guilt and shame. The awareness of these she had lodged in me. I had, therefore, become totally disgusting. Naturally, she could not come near me. If she came she felt that I will push them back into her.

A responded to this by saying that I was right about the awareness. It was not there while I was away. She was convinced that it came from being with me. It was true and not that she felt that way, she insisted. So, she was never going to come. She mustn't come.

As she had said she did not come on Tuesday next week. She was in the same mood. She began with her chhee...ee...e, how to come...how disgusting etc. Very vehemently she said that she did not want to come from the next day. She had brought money to settle my accounts but then she felt that it would not be fair to me. So, she had again decided to terminate from the first of next month.

I felt that the danger of termination was quite real. Her link with me was quite tenuous and could break any minute.

She then spoke of her exams. She said that she had given them in order to get a job but now she did not need a job. Taking money from her husband was no longer a problem. She felt that she had just wasted her time by studying. She then said, “you should see how my parents live!”. Her mother gets totally beaten by her father but she is so clever! She forces him to cough up enough money to buy a plenty of jewellery. Gosh! The diamonds she buys! It was just fantastic! She herself (i.e. A) was dumb. She could not extract a penny from her husband in that manner.

She proceeded to say that her friend B too was equally brilliant. No doubt B came to her house and took away everything. She destroyed A completely. She destroyed her peace of mind too but what a woman! She extracted money from her husband and her father-in-law, too, by sleeping with the latter if need be. I should see the jewellery she possessed! As compared to these two women she herself was a dumb creature for she could not do a thing!

At the end of these two sessions I realised that A had projected various parts of herself into all the external objects around her; power hunger in the husband, destructive and violent parts in her father, exploitative and greedy parts in her mother and in B. Into the maid she had projected all her active and lively parts but these were also contaminated by a simultaneous projection of greedy and power hungry parts. She had then idealised greediness and split it into two – fascinating and destroying. From the way she talked about her mother and B it was clear that she was aware of the damage done by greediness. She knew clearly that her mother paid the price by being totally smashed up and that B's greediness could destroy her own peace of mind. This awareness could lead to unbearable guilt and shame. Quickly, this too was got rid of by projecting it into myself. In this manner I think, A had achieved a psychic balance. However, she was not at all certain if this balance was quite stable. Hence, though she talked about termination she had to keep postponing it.

This view was confirmed in the next two sessions. On Wednesday, A came to the session in a very different mood. She remained silent for two whole minutes which was quite rare for her. She began by saying that she was quite horrified and pissed off with her parents. She didn't know why she had ever had anything to do with them. Why had she allowed herself to be fooled by them, she wondered. They were so...disgusting, so...cheap...so chhee...ee...e. Her brother's wife had given birth to a baby girl and this girl was dark! Finished! The family was in mourning! That horrible mother of hers took her aside and said, "she is dark...she is so dark, just like you, isn't she?". Her father sat with her for two hours and cried, ostensibly because he had so many problems but really because of the birth of a dark female child! She felt terrible. She wanted to run away from there but they hung on to her. What was she to do! Oh, it was just too much! It was horrible, horrible, horrible! She felt that if something was not done she would go mad. She will have to pull herself apart or something like that. She didn't know how to explain her state of mind to me. I could not possibly understand her plight.

The precarious balance she had achieved so far was painfully disturbed. The people into whom she had projected various parts of herself seemed to have thrown them back into her. They were either incapable or unwilling to contain them. She was

clearly pleading to me to that I restore this balance for her. If it was not restored she was in a serious danger of a breakdown. She might go mad or, “pull herself apart” as she put it.

I had some difficulty in interpreting this situation. If I did not find proper words I could sound like, “I told you so” in which case she would get persecuted. I would also increase the danger of this breakdown if she felt that I too was going to throw back the guilt and shame that she had lodged in me. So, first I gave the simplest interpretation I could formulate. I said that the fascinating parents of the last two days had become horrible. They had rejected the dark, female child – herself. I also recognised her pain in this.

A said that she had bitterly told them, “look at your fair children – male or female. What have they achieved?”. Those idiots could not even pass their school exams while she had a First Class in MA and had been a lecturer at the University. But all this did not mean a thing to them. They were so cheap. Here she went into a long, bitter harangue about the parents. Soon she also included her friend B into it.

Finally I said that her parents had no respect or love for the real good in her. They idealised false, hollow things like maleness and fairness. It was an unbearable experience for her. It was this experience that she had been giving to me in the last two sessions. She had insisted that the false life styles of both, her parents and that of B were fantastic while life with me was sick since it represented guilt and shame. In her then I had faced her parents, I added.

A immediately said that though she recognised the truth of her, what I said about her fascination was too powerful. Even now she felt fascinated by their lives. She still felt that I was useless. In the last three years I had achieved nothing. She still wanted to terminate her analysis.

In the next session, A came literally trembling. She said that she was petrified. Her maid had attacked her cook with a big knife. She had insisted that the cook had made a pass at her. This was so blatantly untrue, A added. The cook she knew was a straightforward man. He always kept to himself. He told A that that in fact the maid had tried to seduce him. When he had told her to keep out of his kitchen the maid had

taken out the knife. A was convinced that the cook was being truthful. The girl was quite peculiar, she said.

After finishing this story A added that all the internal stuff I might come out with may be OK but she had a reality problem now. So, I should just tell her what to do and nothing else. It was no good talking about getting rid of the maid. That simply cannot be done because she herself cannot ever take any responsibility. On the other hand the maid was a murderer and cannot be kept in the house. So, what should she do, she asked.

Going by the content of her first association I could have come in here in a variety of ways. I could, for example, talk about how the indulgent-maid-mother was now retaliating because A had projected so much into her. Or I could say that I was the cook who had been truthful and straightforward while she, like the maid, had attacked me by constantly saying how useless I was. It was also possible that my talking about her dumping her painful experience in me for the last few days might have been felt by her as my violent attack on her. However, I felt that it was more useful to talk about the situation that she was putting me into in the session on the point of a knife, as it were.

So, I said that just now she was feeling desperate. She was pleading to me that I save her from this woman. At the same time she had told me that I should not analyse her but deal with the matter purely externally. In this too she gave me no choice. She had insisted that I do not suggest getting rid of the maid as a solution. This was because the maid had two aspects – one a murderer and other a convenient, indulgent, servant. The whole presentation was such that I was to help her but I had no means to do so. Wasn't she holding me at the point of a knife to give her something that she insisted I had, I asked.

A laughed a little here and said yes, that is how she was talking but that was because she really felt like that. There was a long silence here. She seemed slightly relaxed now. Then she said that her husband was quite right. He had said that such a woman must go but A felt that if she herself was so incapable what can be done. But there ought to be a solution and that I must give it to her, she insisted.

I said here that her demand was that I find a solution of the type she had been suggesting. I should, by some means, help her to literally divide the woman into two – one murderous and other indulgent. Then I should, somehow, make it possible that the murderous side should disappear leaving A with only the indulgent side.

Now A laughed out more freely and said that that was exactly what she wanted. That was how her mind worked – her original mind, she added. It wanted such split answers. I was not able to provide these hence I was useless for her.

Though she spoke like this her tone was now quite different. She spoke as if she had recognised the absurdity of her demand. She then said that she must be mad. She was mad but she could not help it. She wanted everything – power, money, endless, mindless sexuality of the type that her friend B had. She wanted all these for free – no guilt at all. On the other hand she wanted all the cultured things as well from her academic friends. She wanted the poetry of SB (naming here a famous Gujarati poet), a variety of classical plays, the pleasures of good stage, the company of learned friends. She was hugely greedy. Greedily she wanted any and every thing that could give her smallest of pleasures. There was no end to this greed, she concluded.

In both the above sessions the problem was the same. Her balance achieved by a combination of projective identification, splitting mechanisms and idealisation had been disturbed and she was pleading that I restore it. At the end of the second session she was visibly relieved. Yet, her balance had not been restored in the manner she had demanded. I think that it was achieved because in me she saw no need to look for an omnipotent solution. She had given me two types of experiences by now. In the first I had faced a couple of loveless, constantly denigrating parents who had a perverted value system that made a child feel totally rejected. In the second I had to sit facing a retaliating, violent, bad object. In both cases I had not become panic stricken or frantic rushing to act out as the patient herself would. This was why A had found some relief from her terrible pain. Due to this she was able to talk about her main problem, that of being hugely greedy. After this session therefore, I had hoped that the danger of termination had slightly reduced but the Friday session proved me wrong.

She began the Friday session by saying that she had definitely made up her mind to terminate. After the last session she had been feeling horribly tired. Her legs were paining badly and she had a splitting headache. Obviously, she added, this was due to analysis. I must not say that she was degrading me by this statement. Really, she was fagged out completely.

Then, after a pause, she said that the problem of the maid was sorted out. Both, she and the cook, will remain in service. Besides, it was no longer significant. She then said that she realised that after I had returned from my holidays her whole mind had changed. She had stopped talking nonsense. In fact, she had stopped phoning her mother and B. She had some peace of mind now. After yesterday she felt that she will certainly take a job to keep busy. She also felt like reviving all her past academic contacts. So, she was quite aware that she was feeling much better. Now there was no need to continue this sick dependence on me especially since she felt so exhausted.

At this point I think I failed to understand correctly what had taken place. I believed at that time that she was feeling exhausted because she had been engaged in an impossible task of splitting her objects. She had felt peaceful because of analysis but like an infant she was experiencing both, good and bad as coming from me only. I gave an interpretation based on this thinking. It was a wrong interpretation even though the patient seemed to relax.

In retrospect I felt that she had experienced me as a good object in the last session. This led to a new problem. First of all, it was a Friday session. She now had to face separation from this good object. Secondly, as she said, she hated this sick dependence. But I feel that the most important problem of all was that of unbearable guilt. For four sessions now she had constantly attacked me by insisting that that I was totally useless for her. She had projected into me whatever all that was painful to her. This could have tired me out and given me a splitting headache, as it were. Her verbal onslaught was enough to have broken my legs. In reality too, the way she brought in her material actually exhausted me. She had quickly introjected this exhausted analyst thus avoiding the problem of guilt. But as I said, I had not understood this at that time. In

my next interpretation therefore, I only took up the issues of separation and dependence.

She responded to this by saying that what I had pointed out yesterday was, after all, a twotwo-penny knowledge. Naturally, nobody can divide a maid into two,two; a child would understand that much she added. But just imagine! She had to come to see me to gain such a trivial understanding! She felt deeply humiliated. She did not want to come anymore.

This argument can be seen as an envious degradation of the good object and her relationship with it i.e. of myself and of the process of analysis. I am sure that as some level it is so. I did feel degraded and angry but as I said in my introduction, at that moment, I could see that A was not at all being manic. She was genuinely distressed that she was so childish that she did not understand a simple thing. She was genuinely humiliated at this idea. I felt therefore, that giving any interpretation based on envy would leave her quite baffled as was my experience in the past.

Here then I agreed with her earlier statement that she was not degrading me. I said that I realised that she must be feeling deeply humiliated. I added that this was not only because of her lack of simple understanding but also because of the magnitude of her dependence this created on me. As she had said, when I came back from my holidays her whole mind had changed. This was not a small matter. Now, once again, she was facing the weekend. She might be frightened that during the next two days she would again lose her peace of mind just as she had done during my holidays.

A said here, “come to think of it” today she had come only because it was a Friday. Next two days may turn out to be terrible. She did not want to take a chance. So there may be some sense in what I was saying.

A did not come on Monday. I was quite apprehensive that she may not come again. The weekend may have produced unbearable tensions just as she had feared. Only four sessions were left before the end of the month. I was not at all sure if she could sustain herself till then.

She arrived on Tuesday once again in a desperate state. She said that she had had the most horrible time. During the weekend her mind was filled up with the conflict: whether she wanted to continue or not. Whichever way she thought she could not decide. Monday morning was the worst time in her life. It had just begun to rain – the first day of the monsoon. She had thought that this would give her an excuse to decide. Due to heavy rains the trains may get stranded. The roads may be dirty and flooded. She may not get a taxi. Anything can be used as an excuse. Also, the day was cool and beautiful. She did not want to waste it on me. Feeling at first that these were good enough reasons she had decided not to come. But she could not be sure. She had, therefore, got dressed, just in case. Till the last minute she remained in this conflict. Finally, as if by chance, she had not come. I think that by this she meant that she had not taken the decision wilfully.

My first idea was that I had become a good-bad object in her mind. I was good because I gave her peace of mind. I was bad because I left her during the weekend making her feel humiliated with sick dependence. I therefore interpreted that her conflicting state of mind was a result of this. A confirmed this by saying that after staying at home she had not at all been happy. Though she had stopped thinking about analysis she had spent the whole day in the most insane conflicts. Here she gave associations after associations all of which had the same struggle- she wanted something desperately at the same time did not want it.

When I looked at these associations I felt that they were not only about conflict- as in the case of an obsessive. They very closely reminded me of her earlier state where she would resort to massive shopping. She had not actually gone out and spent money but was filled up with such desires: I could get this and feel better. I could get that and feel better. As far as I could see she was once again in a “desperately greedy” state. Whatever she did or did not do would frustrate her. I was also aware that during the weekend she had filled up her mind with this “greedy” conflict. The conflict was quite genuine but as long as she held onto it she could avoid any pain of separation. This view of mine was confirmed in the next session.

On Wednesday too A was in this desperate state. Her mind raged with the conflict. In both these sessions I felt her distress was genuine. At one point on Wednesday she became acutely frustrated and said, “Wwhy can’t I have everything?” She wanted both to come and not come. She repeated what she had told me in the previous week namely that she was greedy. She wanted everything- good, bad, indifferent. She added that she hated if she had to do anything to get it. Anything that had to be achieved by effort lost its value and meaning. She hated analysis because she had to slog for it. She had to get up, dress, take a train, take a taxi and then go back. Not only this but she also had to listen to me, understand what I said, remember it and later on apply the understanding in her daily life. All this rendered analysis meaningless.

She proceeded to say that one solution to all this was that someone else does the work and give her what she wanted. This of course was not possible in analysis but in other matters it did work, she said. She corrected herself here and said, “Wwell, for a while at least.” It immediately turned sour because it meant sick dependence which she hated. Also the person would demand a price and then she would lose all interest.

I was now convinced that this conflict about continuing analysis was really a part of the “desperately greedy” state. She had to avoid the pain of separation during the weekend. Secondly, if she moved from this position she had to take responsibility for her analysis which means responsibility for herself and her object, that is myself. She wished she could continue but as she said it led to sick dependence or I demand my price. So she was in a double mind. The way out of this was to quickly identify introjectively with an analyst who was nearly dead with exhaustion. Being in a greedy conflict also helped her to achieve this. It rendered her fagged out during separation that she felt totally justified in not doing anything at all. Thus she had a double defence for a double blind.

Thus I think she had now achieved a new balance- projecting various parts of herself into all the people around her and then introjecting their damaged, exhausted state. I think these two parts of her new psychic balance refer to the two parts of the “desperate and greedy”. What I mean is this: Having projected into people she lived vicariously through them and controlled them tightly. This is the “greedy” part. Everybody had to work and live her life. If they did not, she made them feel guilty. She

then devoured all their efforts. In the earlier part of this paper I have shown how this projecting defended her from the paranoid schizoid anxieties. When it failed she was in danger of a breakdown, she was going to go mad.

The second part of this new balance refers to her “desperation”. Projecting into objects in the above manner meant that they were totally exhausted. They slogged and slogged for her till they nearly died. If she became aware of this she faced an unbearable guilt. She solved this problem by identifying with them introjectively. I have shown how this was clearly visible in the transference. Her session with me gave her peace of mind while I was left exhausted. She talked as if she was desperate and dying if something was not done for her. This in reality was the plight of her objects, which she had conveniently appropriated. This then defended her against depressive anxieties. Thus remaining constantly in a “desperately greedy” state defended her from both paranoid-schizoid and depressive anxieties.

Understanding this structure helped to bring about some movement in A’s analysis, which had so far been rather dead and repetitive in spite of appearing stormy. In the months following the above material, very slight changes began to appear. For example, briefly her envy would emerge. She would say to me, “What kind of person is you! Here I am going on and on provoking you and you sit there feeling nothing”. She said that most of the people around her either dismissed her as mad or got furious. I just sat there unperturbed. At the end of two months she brought in a dream, her first in the three and a half year old analysis. I feel that it indicated a significant change in her mode of operation.

It was brought on a Monday. From the beginning of the session I felt that A was in quite a different mood from her usual conflicting states on Monday sessions. From the previous session we knew that she had finally spread a word around that she wanted a job as a lecturer. First of all she said rather arrogantly that as soon as she had told people about her intentions she had been offered jobs by three different prestigious colleges. She was now in a great demand. She then said that once she settles down in a job she would give up analysis. After all, she had studied psychology as her second subject in college. She knew all about Freud and his dream analysis. Indeed, while a

student, she had written a paper on dreams. Also, she knew that nowadays there were many new modified methods that worked faster than analysis. I had already taken too much of her time. How long could she afford me she asked.

I felt this was a very different sort of patient talking. Never in her analysis had she spoken of having anything worthwhile in her that people wanted. Today she was in great demand. I was so often degraded but this was direct contempt.

Then suddenly in a scream-like excited voice she said that she had the most exquisite, the most pleasurable dream the night before. Of course, she was not going to tell it to me because its meaning was so obvious. Then immediately she told me the dream. In this dream she had come for analysis. As she opened the door of my room she saw me sitting in my chair. I looked completely like a mad, crazy, helpless child. She herself had become like how I am in reality, she said- calm and quiet and very mature. It was the pleasurable experience. She felt such peace of mind.

I talked about the acting of the dream the session. I showed her how she had all my qualities today. She was greatly in demand, she knew all about Freud and dream analysis. Indeed, she was better than I because she had written a paper on dreams. In the session itself it was giving her so much pleasure. She was feeling mature and ready to terminate, I had become this silly, expensive analyst who was quite worthless.

The projective and the introjective identifications are both vividly present. The change is that I am not introjected as a destroyed or exhausted object. Some of my qualities, although highly idealised, are retained. To this extent I am now quite separate. It is now possible to talk about her jealousy and envy.

Before I end this paper I would like to briefly compare this “desperately greedy” state with pathological organisations. Steiner (1988) says, “...pathological organisation of the personality can be seen to evolve from states where the ego is fragmented and parts of the self are projected into multiple objects or part objects. These objects each containing part of the self are then assembled into an organisation often held together by a powerful and rigid structure.” He also suggested that, “ the organisations give rise to a borderline position where the patient retreat to escape from the paranoid- schizoid and depressive anxieties.”

In my patient's case the "desperately greedy" state was similarly a retreat from these two basic types of anxieties. The difference I feel lies in the fact that this organisation was not "held together in a powerful and rigid structure." She was always frantic because after projecting she continued to live in a constant dread either of a breakdown or of having to face an unbearable guilt.

Summary

A patient has been described who seems to remain constantly in a "desperately greedy" state. This state is then defined. It is then suggested that this state is a double defence of the patient protecting her from both paranoid-schizoid and depressive anxieties defined by Melanie Klein. Clinical material is presented in support of this hypothesis. A dream is presented to indicate a slight but significant change. Finally, comparison is made between this "desperately greedy" state and pathological organisations showing a similarity and an important difference.

References

Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and Melancholia: Std. Ed. Vol. 14. 243-258.

Joseph, B. (1989) Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change. New Library of Psychoanalysis, London.

(1960) Some Characteristics of the Psychopathic Personality. 34-46.

(1981) Towards Experiencing Psychic Pain. 88-100.

Klein, M. (1957) Envy and Gratitude. The Writings of Melanie Klein. Hogarth Press and the Int. of Psychoanalysis, London. 176-235.

Meltzer, D. (1973) Terror, Persecution and Dread. Sexual States of Mind. Clunie Press, Perthshire.

Segal, H. (1979) Klein. Fontana Modern Masters. 173-148.

Steiner, J. (1988) Pathological Organisations as Obstacles to Mourning: The Role of Unbearable Guilt. *Int. J. of Psychoanalysis* (1990). 71, 87.