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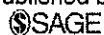
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## THE RELATIONAL TRADITION: LANDSCAPE AND CANON

This essay charts the origins, influences, and evolution of the relational tradition in contemporary psychoanalysis. Considering the theoretical and philosophical influences from nineteenth-century Americans like William James and C. S. Pierce, and noting the seminal modern work of Steven Mitchell and Jay Greenberg in opening a critique of one-person focused drive theory, the essay follows developments over a quarter century. Hallmarks of the relational approach—social construction, two-person psychologies, multiple self-states, social regulation and construction of identities like gender and sexual orientation, and an evolving theory of clinical practice—are reviewed. New developments in clinical theory, in the study of identity categories, in the work on embodiment and enactment, and in developmental models are also reviewed.

To mark the centennial of the American Psychoanalytic Association, the editors of this journal have commissioned a series of articles on different psychoanalytic traditions and invited me to contribute an essay on relational psychoanalysis, a relatively new orientation, only now about to pass the quarter-century mark. In this essay I will describe the history and evolution of this perspective, its theoretical underpinnings and ancestry, and its emergence as a powerful critique of, and alternative to, the more classical movements in psychoanalysis.

But first a word about comparative psychoanalysis. As I think now, in 2010, of the distinct movements within the field, it strikes me that one of the important dimensions is the dynamic and interdependent aspect of analytic theory and analytic work. None of the traditions—object relations, self psychology, modern Freudian, Kleinian, relational—are, any longer, exactly discrete entities. What historically were major differences appear now as more subtle distinctions. There are many points of influence among

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the dominant perspectives: some acknowledged, some disavowed, some ignored. Developments in the use of terms like *enactment*, *countertransference*, *thirdness*, and *intersubjectivity*, to name just a few, cross back and forth among different schools of thought. Across many different points of view, for example, there is a strong conviction of the power of countertransference, its utility and presence in much mutative action in treatments, even as this understanding is translated into many different modes of work and clinical process. Later in this essay, in a section on clinical process, I will detail some of the spectrum of differences in the ways relational analysts work with countertransference.

A second term in this discussion of the centennial of the American also deserves unpacking. *American*. In thinking about how relational theory manifests something of its cultural and historical origins, Steven Mitchell and I (Mitchell and Harris 2004) launched a discussion with colleagues and each other. What's American about American psychoanalysis? we asked, and were sometimes surprised by our colleagues' and our own answers.

Most centrally, we felt, American (and certainly relational) thought emerged from the important background theories of pragmatism and semiotics, evolving from the late-nineteenth-century work of William James and C. S. Pierce. I draw on our essay here.

There are a number of aspects of William James's (1890, 1907, 1910) far-reaching thought that we might highlight in the light of the evolution of American psychoanalysis. James distrusted but did not repudiate abstraction. He was determined to ground any understanding in subjective experience, the immediacy and ongoing stream of conscious life. James sought to widen the scope of psychology from problems of knowing to include problems of believing or ethics. Passions are as crucial for ways of knowing as is mind. There are some familiar themes here: an instinctive pull for indeterminacy, for multiple ways of knowing. In James, this democratic, or perhaps more accurately egalitarian, impulse is grounded in philosophy, not ideology.

James (1907), writing on pragmatism, on the experience of the self, on his theory of radical empiricism, produced an important and influential network of ideas that feels quite familiar to relational analysts. His focus was on experience. His interest always lay in the particular instance, not the general concept. His focus on experience—not simply of things, but of things and relations—and his attention to a kind of hermeneutical circular relation between belief, desire, and action must strike an American (and particularly, an interpersonal psychoanalytic) reader as deeply familiar. This approach in philosophy and critical theory was, quite simply yet grandly, to understand the multiple intersections (James's term) between the individual's knowing of objects, the public shared nature of that

knowing, and the problem of how one mind knows another. These ideas are strong anchors for contemporary American psychoanalysis where the intrapsychic and the interpersonal co-construct, where mind is simultaneously social, individual, public and private.

Amid the controversies about adjudicating and verifying truth or meaning, James (1907) provides a powerful statement for a kind of perspectivalism and certainly a pragmatic and also narrative theory. "Truth in science is what gives us the maximum possible set of satisfactions. taste included, but consistency with previous truth and with novel fact is always the most imperious claimant" (p. 104). It is certainly the case that James and later pragmatists identify truth with expediency and utility, but for James, this identification must have as its corollary the openness to revision and error. His most acute opposition was to a notion of foundational, absolute truth, separate from experience. In this sense, James had an almost visceral distaste for metapsychology.

Certainly, one can read James in the light of Sullivan (1953, 1964) and interpersonal psychoanalysis, finding themes and preoccupations that cannot simply default to behaviorism. Because psychoanalysis, across its spectrum, insists on the centrality of meaning making, C. S. Peirce's (1955) theory of meaning could be seen as a background influence on perspectivalism and the contemporary preoccupations with intersubjectivity. Peirce built a complex triadic structure distinguishing the word, its meaning for the speaker, and its distinct but overlapping quasi-shared meaning for the listener. This complex model of meaning as intersubjective has had powerful influences in the academy [Mitchell and Harris 2004, pp. 169–170].

To turn to the contemporary scene, we can see that there is, now, more dialogue, but even without dialogue there is much mutual influence. I do not mean to subscribe here to Wallerstein's notion of common ground (1992) but rather to seeing analytic perspectives as lived in some mode of interaction and interpenetration. Relational theory certainly emerged at warp speed, but it evolved and changed in response to the sharp critiques and controversies that were engaged almost immediately. In this essay, I will be paying attention to these transformative moments (in looking at analytic subjectivity, at questions of gender and sexuality, at the ubiquity and shape of trauma, at the power of early development and primitive states).

In the history of psychoanalysis, the disruption and erasure of conversations about technique, or metapsychology or theory, have been costly. I think here of Freud's and the Freudians' split with Ferenczi (Haynal 2002; Aron and Harris 1994), a split that kept the concept of trauma much too isolated, distinct, and polarized in relation to the concept of unconscious fantasy. Ferenczi is an important figure for the relational world, really a crucial ancestor, perhaps the ur-mother. To draw on Loewald's evocative

image, the reintegration of Ferenczi into psychoanalytic cultures, a strong early project of relationalists was to turn a ghost back into an ancestor. The (re)turn to Ferenczi was also a hope for the emergence of healthy debate about technique, as well as about trauma and its long sequelae in psychic life.

The question of influence and multiple perspectives is particularly crucial in thinking about the relational tradition. Those of us in what might be termed the first generation at *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* (Lewis Aron, Neil Altman, Anthony Bass, Jessica Benjamin, Philip Bromberg, Jody Davies, Muriel Dimen, Emmanuel Ghent, and I) were all (along with Mitchell) immigrants, arriving at a relational address from a wide variety of background analytic cultures. There is an interesting distinction between small “r” and capital “R” relational perspectives, relationalists who like hybridity (mixed models) and those who want to deepen and particularize the relational tradition. My own inclinations are hybridic, but I think the dialogue within the relational world around these matters is very healthy.

At the outset, I want to mark one striking aspect of the relational turn. Relational psychoanalysis was initiated by the intense genius and powerful writing of Steven Mitchell (1988, 1993a,b, 1997, 2000; Mitchell and Aron 1999). While there are many strands, many influences, and many signal figures and interpreters, active from the beginning of the relational movement, it is Mitchell who was the lodestar, the catalyst, the writer and thinker of most powerful imagination who launched this movement and endowed it with its initial credibility and potency.

Mitchell died, very suddenly and unexpectedly, at the height of his intellectual and organizational powers, at the age of fifty-four, in 2000, scarcely a decade into the relational movement’s own fast trajectory. A second seminal figure in this tradition, Emmanuel Ghent, died in 2005. This has meant that the group, who, alongside these figures, inaugurated the relational tradition, has continued to evolve within a context that includes traumatic loss and the various tasks of mourning.

In Martin Bergmann’s edited collection *Dissidence and Controversy* (2004), he and a number of the contributors point out that psychoanalysis, in its classical forms, emerged in its first half-century with its founder still writing, working, and theorizing. One might in retrospect think that there are costs and benefits of long periods of domination by a single leader, on the one hand, and the emergence of new theory in the context of early ruptures and losses, on the other.

## RELATIONAL IDEAS IN FORMATION

Mitchell's earliest papers (1978, 1981) were criticisms of the canonical psychoanalytic work on homosexuality, which he charged as being insufficiently psychoanalytic and overly moralistic. One can see his determination to establish an alterity, a space of difference, and a critical engagement with drive theory. His early recognition of the destructive effects of moral judgments and pathologizing in the understanding and treatment of homosexuality was striking both in the trust he had in his own voice and vision, and in the attention to the social and regulatory (not a word he used) impulses in psychoanalytic theory.

First with Jay Greenberg, in *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983), Mitchell launched a consideration of a wide range of theories, marking what they termed a "radical alternative" to one-person drive theory in the widely different work of Klein, Winnicott, Kernberg, and Kohut. Mitchell and Greenberg saw all these theorists, despite their differences, as joined in a fundamental commitment to the primacy of object ties and what even then was being called "relational" experience. In this first book, the Jamesian perspective peeks out. Summarizing their work, they speak for theoretical and clinical approaches to be judged on their utility (p. 380).

After 1983, in a series of books written alone, Mitchell (1988, 1993b, 1997, 2000) developed the relational perspective, considering metapsychological matters, clinical process, models of mind, and a richly textured sense of the dyadic flow of analytic work. His work, constitutive of relational theory, was dynamic, moving, and open to transformation from inside and outside relational culture.

In *Hope and Dread* (Mitchell 1993b) he outlined the relational revolution, small r. It was to be a revolution in what the analyst knew (echoes of Lacan here) and a revolution in what the patient wanted (echoes of Ferenczi). By the end of his life, Mitchell had reconnected to an earlier and important figure, Hans Loewald. Through the lens on early development that Loewald evolved, Mitchell began to attend to those aspects of relationality that emerge in the earliest attachments. I will return to this work later in this essay.

Mitchell was a person who liked to build structures, organizations, writing projects, and conferences. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* was launched in the late 1980s and began to publish in 1991. Even in that beginning, Mitchell was mindful of the power of conversation to shift theory and practice. When Mitchell inaugurated the journal, he noted that

"Relational Perspectives" in the subtitle of the Journal suggests our belief that all of the major currents within postclassical psychoanalytic thought have grappled, to different degrees and each in its own fashion, with the replacement of Freud's "drive" metapsychology with a theoretical framework based most fundamentally on relations between self and others. There have been important paradigmatic shifts on many different levels of theory making: clinical, developmental, technical, and epistemological.

Mutual influence has also led to sharp differences. The psychoanalytic process is extraordinarily complex and ambiguous, impossible to trace in one voice, to comprehend in a single perspective. Some of the important differences among current psychoanalytic schools were developed in reaction, perhaps overreaction, to omissions or underemphases in another model. The interpersonal emphasis on actuality was partially a response to Freud's emphasis on "psychic reality" and fantasy; the importance within object relations theories attributed to real parental care was partially a response to Klein's emphasis on universal, a priori conflicts and terrors. The centrality of hope in self psychology is partially a response to the salience of envy and dread in Kleinian and neo-Kleinian formulations, and so on. Taken out of context, each of the current psychoanalytic perspectives appears skewed or imbalanced in one direction or another. Examined in the context of their implicit and often unacknowledged responses to each other, contemporary psychoanalytic theories can be understood as single voices within a larger discussion, voices that can be more fully grasped and appreciated only when one has access to the other participants in the conversation [Mitchell 1991, p. 1].

Mitchell joined with Emmanuel Ghent, Philip Bromberg, James Fosshage, and Bernard Friedland to form the relational track at NYU in 1989. The structures and landscapes Mitchell built and inspired were available to many colleagues, with overlapping but not always identical theoretical perspectives. The early relational world was a wonderful place to think in. Analysts, young and old, were encouraged to find their own voice, palpably one of the signature features of Mitchell's own analytic persona. From the outset in the relational world, one had a feeling of having been authorized to speak and to operate with considerable freedom from orthodoxy.

What were the signature themes of relational thought? What were people thinking about?

## TWO-PERSON PSYCHOLOGIES

This is perhaps the most dramatic concept that inaugurated the relational turn. The idea that minds emerge in the matrix of social relationships, that

mind is interpersonal as well as individuated, has been central to the relational project. It is this element, the intersubjective aspect of mind, and the two-ness even of one-ness that differentiates relational from at least some object-relational thinking. Through the work and influence of Emmanuel Ghent, Winnicott's very dyadic view of transitional space and transitional objects became a strong component of relational work. Ghent's brilliant evocations of Winnicottian ideas of the power of interaction (in particular the constitutive effects of the infant's attempts to destroy and aggress against the other) produced a set of papers expanding our understanding of the use of relatedness as crucial to the formation of internal representations and to the establishment of distinctions between reality and fantasy (Ghent 1990, 2002). Sadism and masochism, he argued, have, at heart, relational projects. For sadism, it was object finding and for masochism, it was a retreat from contact, or, to use Ghent's preferred term, a retreat from surrender.

For developmentalists like me, this determination to see the social as constitutive of the individual spoke of the social and cognitive theories of Vygotsky (1934, 1978). Here is how I imagined Vygotsky's usefulness for psychoanalysis:

We acquire language and language acquires us. We are inserted into and get some command over the experience of speech. But there is no seamless fit between speech and self, text and subjectivity. The relation of speaking and being, including being a particular gender, is one of excess and gaps.

Vygotsky's interest in the intersect of speech and thinking focused on what we would call metacognition, a form of knowing he called co-knowing and a form of consciousness and self-consciousness he thought a multiply configured system [1934, 1078]. Reflective functioning was a very particular capacity, derived out of the social experience of being known, spoken to, and thought about. Meta-consciousness would be both representational and instrumental, part of a system of action and regulation. The Vygotskian self is therefore private and public, social and personal, conscious and unconscious. A Vygotskian child emerges with an intentional or aspectual self, a formation born out of social relations and what psychoanalysts would now term intersubjectivity [Harris 2005, p. 38].

For analyst researchers like Beebe (Beebe and Lachmann 2005; Beebe et al. 2005), Seligman (2003, 2005; Seligman and Harrison 2011), and the Boston Change Process Study Group (Stern et al. 1998), these ideas flowed from infant-parent observation. The potency and power of the early schemes of interaction created a template for subsequent forms



of interaction. Beebe and Lachmann (2005) established the concept of three forms of salience—ongoing regulation, rupture and repair, and heightened affective moments—as the ground of clinical and early relational life. Along with the work of the Boston Change group on the power of “now” moments, and the work of attachment theorists, there was a focus on the intense and abiding presence of nonverbal and preverbal forms of representation and interaction. All these writers, some relational and some more self psychological, altered how relational clinicians (and many others) saw clinical “reality.” Twoness, one would say, was always already an aspect of oneness.

For Irwin Z. Hoffman (1998), in the context of his seminal work with Merton Gill, two-person-ness came as an aspect of social constructionism, a form that for Hoffman was quite radical in its nature. In thinking of the ubiquity of social construction as an aspect of mind and of cure, Hoffman focused on the elements of suggestion, power, and intimacy in all analytic dyadic life. Hoffman has always paid attention to the temporal dimension of the intersubjective and the intrapsychic, noting the ways in which out of the process of social construction of shared and individual reality, the past is reshaped along with the future.

Jessica Benjamin’s work on complementarity (1988, 1995, 1998) has been a core idea undergirding relational thinking about two-person-ness. Her work was influenced by a philosophical tradition grounded in the Frankfurt school, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin. In the process of both forming attachments and negotiating separation, Benjamin stressed, is the potential for the emergence of new forms of relatedness, of distinct kinds of thirdness in the process of negotiating subjectivity and objectivity. The dyad is always more than two-ness. In fact, as she argued and as we now see in many clinical encounters, too symmetrical and jammed a form of two-ness leaves both partners in the dyad caught in a sadomasochistic dance. Doer, done to. This collapse of mutual recognition, for a number of relationalists (Benjamin, Aron, Joyce Slochower, Stuart Pizer), led inevitably to clinical impasse.

In another slant on two-person-ness, Donnel Stern (2010) has recently examined the element of witnessing in clinical process, arguing that experience and self-consciousness arise in the context of being witnessed and that enactments are moments when the functioning of witness has collapsed and must be restored. Stern, on a micro-level, and Gerson (2009), on a macro-level, are both struggling with the impact of recognition or its collapse on processes of growth and self-coherence or intelligibility.

Stern is an interesting figure to pause and look at. He is grounded both in the interpersonal tradition and the relational. Decidedly part of the immigrant generation, he is hybridic also in his use of hermeneutics as a grounding for psychoanalytic theorizing. In his work one feels his attention to the fragility and interpersonal quality of any form of knowing another, the instability and uncertainty of boundaries and meanings, the difficult necessity of "courting surprise."

### **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM, SOCIAL REGULATION**

In pursuing the question of social construction of unconscious and intrapsychic, as well as interpersonal life, the relationalists centered on the dyad but increasingly felt the need to go beyond it. There are influences from Fromm (1941, 1947) and Levenson (2006), drawn from the interpersonalist tradition, which made cultural formation an important element in the individual psyche. But, perhaps more important, there were strong influences on relational thought from Foucault (1961, 1976, 1988), from critical theory and ideology critique, and from political activism. For those of us particularly working in the areas of gender and sexuality, the insights of Foucault and Althusser (1970), and for a succeeding generation those of Žižek (1989) and Levinas (1974 [English translation 1998]), have been crucial. An intriguing aspect of these theorists is their demand that analysts deploy a certain self-consciousness in regard to method. We cure with contaminated tools. Psychoanalytic ideas may have emerged from a radical edge of cultural life (see Schorske 1961), but psychoanalysis has also been part of the establishment of various cultural hegemonies and ideas of normativity that shape how many aspects of identity come to be understood and felt by all of us.

Muriel Dimen (2003) is an exemplary relational figure whose attention is consistently attuned to the psychological, the political, and the social, as these forces play out in conscious and unconscious ways. Her work on sexuality, drawn from a long career in psychoanalysis, a formation in anthropology, and a grounding in feminism, insists on the public-ness and the private-ness of sexuality. Disgust, excitement, excess all intersect and combust with the grids or power and regulation that manage and produce sexuality. In her work, the goal is always to keep dialogues going among the unconscious and the social, the body and the culture. Virginia Goldner (1991, 2003) also works in this tradition. Dimen and Goldner (2002), in a collection of essays on relational work on gender and sexuality, identify the

moment when relational theory and psychoanalytic feminism catch hold of each other:

These essays may be said to concern themselves with, as well as to occupy, many tensions that produce useful paradoxes. One of these is between modernism and postmodernism. In the modernist vision, gender constitutes a foundational and transhistorical category of mind and culture, while in postmodern terms, gender reads as a fluid and variable social construction. Significantly, these categories emerged in tandem in psychoanalysis, such that at the very moment when gender was being revived as a crucial subject of interest and as a category of psychoanalytic thought, it also began to critically and creatively fall apart, losing both its philosophical and experiential coherence [p. xvi].

Another crucial figure in this opening of a feminist and relational psychoanalytic perspective is Jessica Benjamin. In outlining her theories of intersubjectivity, of the prevalence of complementarity, and the doer / done to impasse in encounters clinical and otherwise, Benjamin was also theorizing a new way to imagine femininity and maternity, as the site for difference as well as merger.

Ken Corbett (1993, 1999, 2009) situates his work both in a relational tradition and in queer theory. Now a word about terminology. The dialogues between psychoanalytic theory and various movements of liberation and social activism are multidirectional and complex. Going back to the 1970s, one can see that, in regard to feminism, the encounter of psychoanalysis (Chodorow 1976; Dinnerstein 1976) was fortuitous for those social movements. A rather weakly behaviorist idea about role change deepened into an inspired encounter of psychoanalysis, gender, and sexuality. The tenacity and uncertainty of unconscious fantasy and intrapsychic process, the hallmark of psychoanalysis, was not a way early women's liberationists understood social formations and individual lives. It took a lot of input from what was broadly described as psychoanalytic feminism, a theoretical practice that is more than solely or simply relational (see Elise 1997, 2002; Chodorow 1992, 1994), from a more Freudian and object-relational approach, and from Dimen, Goldner, Harris, Corbett, and others to alter the basic understandings in that political perspective.

The power of domination of doer / done to, the draw many women felt toward submission and masochism, and the anxieties many women had about aggression and sexuality, when folded into feminism made that body of ideas an immeasurably more complex theory and practice.

In those early years, an analysis of theory as social regulation opened up a crucial and painful history of pathologizing of gender and sexual variance. In the 1980s a movement began in the other direction, from activism to theory via critical theory, cultural studies and many elements of postmodernism and poststructuralism. Queer theory (and its perhaps central figure from philosophy, Judith Butler [1990, 2005]) began to remake the psychoanalytic theories of gender and sexuality (Grosz 1994). Queering psychoanalysis might be one way to describe the current projects in regard to gender, race, and class. Very broadly, many of these figures draw on and utilize some or many elements of relational theory.

Dimen and Goldner (2002) again:

If 1970s feminism may be said to have asked, "Gender, what is it?" these essays pose a more basic question. "Gender, is it?" When gender's meaning is inspected, its coherence is now most often ascribed to social construction—to the practices of language, culture and psyche. Any given gender identity is no longer a self-evident psychic structure. Indeed, gender's multiplicity of significance can be deconstructed into a force field of difference(s) inflected by power [p. xvi].

In Corbett's work on masculinity (2009; Corbett and Salamon 2011) and in the work on heterosexual masculinities (Reis and Grossmark 2009), masculinity is finally being deconstructed, seen in its many limiting and traumatic implications. The traumatic effects of the pressure on making early separation normative for boys are finally more visible. The complexities of masculinities finally join up with the deconstructing of femininity, which certainly begins with Freud. But with the new attention to deconstructive masculinity, the canonical has become symptomatic.

In thinking of the community of analysts who worked on sex and gender and questions of identity within this relational tradition, it is impossible to imagine these developments outside the context of American cultural and political life and the explosion of liberatory movements from civil rights through feminism and gay liberation that characterized the 1960s and 1970s. Empowerment to speak one's mind, intense critical reassessment of any and all orthodoxies, and participation in broad social movements for justice and freedom were the social and often actual context for the generation of analysts developing relational theory.

No identity category was immune from interrogation and resignification, to use a term of Judith Butler's (2005). This backdrop is foundational, but I think it is no accident that many of us were drawn to psychoanalysis to deepen and engage with the social and political categories that had become

compelling. "Social construction" has meant many things to relationalists, but for those working on gender and sexuality, the social was both micro and macro, the crucible of the family shot through with the grids of power and meaning through which social forces at many levels functioned to define and shape individual and collective lives.

The question of a cultural context for psychoanalytic theory and practice is an exceedingly complex one. In the symposium *What Is American about American Psychoanalysis?* a cultural theorist, Shirmeister (2004), was of the view that the initially positive reception of psychoanalytic ideas was due in part to America in 1912 being still a culture in mourning. She was referring to the long shadow of the Civil War and its shaping of American (and particularly Southern) consciousness.

One might see other periods of strain as well. The post-World War II period, often characterized as the Age of Certainty, was also a period of great trauma and difficulty. There are the European refugee analysts bringing midcentury psychoanalysis to America (Jacoby 1983); there is the generation of American analysts working in the shadow of the postwar experience with veterans; there is the period of political repression and fear ushered in by McCarthyism, the blacklist, and the Cold War (Schrecker 1998). The mourning attendant on the aftermath of the war, on the loss of progressive ideals and hopes in the Cold War era, as well as that suffered by the European community arriving in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, all may have had a subtle but inexorable role in the structuring of psychoanalytic theory and practice in the postwar decades. Perhaps one might say that that this quality of certainty, in a climate when thinking and feeling had become less and less safe, was also laced with anxiety and reaction formation.

The huge opening of critical thought and action characterizing the 1960s—the backdrop, I am suggesting, of relational thought—comes then after much silencing and a repressive climate. Part of what may make dialogue and interchange between the generations difficult is the great gap between the fifties and the sixties, a gap defined not by conformity vs. spontaneity/rebellion, but by silence and oppression on one hand and, on the other, an insistence, no doubt overdue, on resistance, and demands for justice.

#### **MULTIPLE SELF-STATES: RELATIONAL METAPSYCHOLOGY**

Another key element in these transformations of questions of identity in relational thought is the long-standing relational preoccupation with

multiple self-states and with a metapsychology in which shifting states of identity, powered by dissociative processes of varying intensity, account for many features of analytic dyadic work and the fluid, ongoing nature of identity and identifications. Hybridity. Multiplicity. Shifting self-states, vertical splits: these are the signs of trauma for some, the normative models of mind for others.

The work on shifting and multiple self-states inevitably led to a model of mind that features vertical splits, the powerful presence of dissociation and dissociative processes in both dyads and individuals (Davies 1994, 1996, 2001; Bromberg 1998, 2006). Beginning with the powerful contributions of Davies (Davies and Frawley 1994) on the impact of sexual abuse on mental structure and psychic process, the relational work was perhaps first most known and most notorious for a strong use of analytic subjectivity and countertransference.

In this context, consider the evolution of the work of Philip Bromberg, an analyst steeped both in the interpersonalist tradition, transformed in his encounter with Mitchell and Ghent, and in the influential work of Bollas. Bromberg has gone on, in the past decade, to center his interests in dissociative process, an interest driven by and responsive to clinical experience. An important function of dissociative processes, Bromberg argues, is the management of relational space. Paradoxically, dissociation is used in the service of certain kinds of false continuities and coherences. Intolerable and very shamed-based self-states must be kept split off in order for the individual to avoid dislocation from precious others. Again, in a paradoxical circumstance, dissociation may be the glue (if that's the term) for attachment. In his clinical work, Bromberg tracks the moments, endlessly lived and relived, in which the patient repeats, under an ancient injunction not to notice certain fundamental aspects of self or others, a split state that *keeps* a connection. It is the cost of these splits, the difficulty in their undoing, that Bromberg's work addresses.

#### **DEVELOPMENT, MOTIVATION, EMERGENT FUNCTION**

Work in this domain has gone through several generational transformations. Ghent, trained early on in object relations, followed and extended Winnicott in a paper studying masochism in relation to submission and surrender. I quote from this paper extensively to illustrate its breadth of spirit and clinical acumen:

Yet it is needed "not because of the baby's impulse to destroy, but because of the object's liability not to survive" (an idea from Winnicott). The varieties of non-survival include retaliation, withdrawal, defensiveness in any of its forms, an overall change in attitude in the direction of suspiciousness or diminished receptivity, and finally, a kind of crumbling, in the sense of its losing one's capacity to function adequately as mother, or in the analytic setting, as analyst.

This conception of development involving the difficult passage from object relating to object use implies a radical departure from the usual analytic notion that aggression is reactive to the encounter with external reality (the reality principle). Here it is destructiveness that creates the very quality of externality.

But the main reason for this discussion of the development of the capacity for object usage is to explore its relation to surrender, masochism, and now, sadism. The essence of both transitional experiencing and the transition into object usage is the heady and wonderful world of creative experiencing wherein self and other have the opportunity to become real. Failures in either or both of these developmental currents lead to the development of one or other variety of false self; from the baby's point of view they might well be called failures of faith.

A principal cause of failure in transitional experiencing is what has already been referred to as impingement by the caretaker. We have seen how this intrusiveness interferes with true experiencing or "coming into being," with the distressing result that for the infant to "exist," continuing impingement is required. Here we saw the beginnings of masochism. I have suggested also that in many people there is an impulse to surrender, perhaps in order to reengage that area of transitional experiencing, the miscarriage of which impulse or longing appears as masochism or submission.

I now suggest the possibility that failure of the transition from object relating to object usage would result from a different (but probably related) failure of the caretaker: retaliation, defensiveness, negativity on the part of the caretaker or crumbling of her or his effectiveness. In either case the triple misfortune is that the subjective object never becomes real but remains a bundle of projections, and externality is not discovered; as a corollary the subject is now made to feel that he or she is destructive; and finally, fear and hatred of the other develops, and with them, characterological destructiveness comes into being. In short we have the setting for the development of sadism (in what remains a unit self, a self as isolate), the need to aggressively control the other as a perversion of object usage, much as we have seen in masochism as a perversion of surrender [Ghent 1990, p. 125].

I think that Ghent and Benjamin both had a strong influence on Mitchell's shift toward an interest in development. I like to think my work was also part of that push. In early writings, Mitchell was quite antagonistic to what he termed the "developmental tilt" in classical

theory, a focus he felt infantilized the complex, negotiated interpersonal scene in the analysis of adults. One hears in this critique the influence of the interpersonalist tradition. But recently, Steven Cooper (in press) suggests that Bromberg's paper on regression was another crucial influence on Mitchell's turn toward development and early intersubjective states.

At the end of Mitchell's all too brief life, he had reconnected with an early affinity for Loewald and was now deeply interested in the emergence of self in the context of self-and-other, an idea Loewald (1972), with a unique complexity, had developed. In *Relationality*, Mitchell (2000) noted the degree to which relational terms and ideas were visible throughout the psychoanalytic world. What he was not noticing so explicitly were the shifts in relational theory, and in his own work, in response to growth within the perspective and in response to critical demands to clarify the role and function of the unconscious in psychic life, as well as the fate and status of primitive states. In Mitchell's hands, Loewald can be seen as a powerful visionary for the notion of human subjectivity as *emergent* within a relational matrix, one characterized from the earliest moments as a site of primal density from which object states and subjectivity emerge.

Reading *Relationality* now in 2010, in preparing this essay, I am struck by the way Mitchell distinguishes Loewald from the interpersonalist Harry Stack Sullivan and the infancy researcher Daniel Stern. One can see that Sullivan's commitment to the power of language as a separating force from early dyadic process may have put the interpersonal track on an antidevelopmental pitch. But Mitchell takes care to describe Loewald's model of the interplay of primary and secondary process as one where interpenetration is pervasive. Words catch fire in relational context, in dyadic affective life. The key for Loewald was balance, the constant vitalizing force of affect states and linguistic representations. For me, this positions Loewald and the relational ideas of early states and development more in parallel with Laplanche (1989, 1999), a theorist for whom the instability of inside/outside, self and other, excess and vitalization are key in the constituting of identity and sexuality.

The relationalist who has put Laplanche to most use is Ruth Stein, and here one might note the hybridity of her formation, Freudian and relational. In her *JAPA* prize winning paper on sexuality as excess, Stein (2006, 2008) integrates classical ideas about excitement, Laplanchean accounts of the simultaneous and coterminous constitution of sexuality and the unconscious in an encounter with the other (surely a two-person account of sexuality),



along with insights about shame and transgression from contemporary queer theory: “The intriguing idea in both Laplanche and Bersani is that for psychic structure to evolve it would need not only more evolved structures but a positive striving toward an ‘excessive other’ who is mystifying, whose effect can be overwhelming, even potentially shattering” (Stein 2008, p. 54).

It has been left to the next generation of relationalists to deepen and draw out the strength and value of the attachment literature, the research and theorizing about mentalization, and questions of developmental modeling. What remains? What transforms? How to constitute the onset of human subjectivity?

Interestingly, the central figures in this evolution of relational thinking are all people who bridge disciplines. Hybrids. From infant mental health, family systems, infant observation, developmental psychology, and developmental psychopathology, a picture of developmental process and its impact on clinical experience emerges. Seligman’s review essay on this matter (2003) begins with a description of infant capacity, a description that sets the stage for understanding the implications for the infant psyche of such capacious processing capacities. For Seligman, the sensitivity and integrative capacity of the child are set in the context of the relational matrix and endless transformations, re-editing, and re-inscription. This is like Ghent’s motivation models, and Edelman’s. Seligman is also a spokesman for the need for subtlety in using paradigms of kinds of attachment, for moving beyond a monolithic use of the research to something more variable and nuanced in parent-child relating.

Beebe and Lachmann (2005), most signally, and also the Boston Change Process Group stress the potency and permanence of early dyadic life, the print of early transactions and nonverbal, affectively constituted experience as a template, capable of transformation but also in certain ways immutable. This tension between what developmental theory offers—a theory of growth and a theory of the power of past and generalized schemas—is one of those hot points in relational thinking, a place of debate and dialogue centering around how clinical experience is viewed (see Beebe’s “face lady” paper, in Beebe et al. 2005).

In the past decade, significant developments in neuroscience offer interesting points of conversation and integration. Damasio (1999) and Ledoux (1996) on the essential enmeshing of emotion and cognition, Gallese (2009) on mirror neurons, and the research traditions looking at infant mind (for reviews of these traditions, see Melzoff 1990; Fonagy

2001; Gopnik 2010)—all of these are creating an engaged field of inquiry to think about what develops, what is interpersonal, how relational matrices become intrapsychic. There are already many strong arguments for the need for caution, for nonreductionist ways of thinking about interdisciplinary translations, but their utility—for metaphor, for theory building, for clinical listening—seems to me undeniable.

### CLINICAL PROCESS

While there are debates within the relational group about how or even whether to codify relational technique, it is in the area of clinical process that the profound change relational psychoanalysis intended to effect in the field was first initiated.

It is in the realm of clinical process that the most pointed controversies and conflicts with the more classical world of psychoanalysis arose. Some of this debate was captured in an essay by Charles Spezzano (1998), ironically but also exasperatedly subtitled “What Do Relational Analysts Do between Disclosures and Enactments?” Relational theory is an example of a radical field theory, a theory in which the social field and the individual are powerfully interdependent. Other examples of this kind of theorizing include the post-Bionian work of Ferro (1996) and Lombardi (2008, 2009).

The implications for clinical work flowed for Mitchell (and for others particularly interested in clinical process) from the ubiquity of countertransference and the implications of a two-person psychology. The key figures in the evolution of clinical process ideas are Bromberg, Aron, Hoffman, Davies, Bass, Spezzano, Slochower, Stuart Pizer, Cooper and, more recently, Philip Ringstrom (2007) and Steven Knoblauch (2000); from the related interpersonalist side, Donnel Stern (2010) and Darlene Ehrenberg (1992) have made important contributions. (See also Samuel Gerson [2004] on the relational unconscious.) How is the analyst to make use of his or her subjectivity? Is personal visibility or disclosure dangerous, narcissistic, making the analyst more important than the patient, perverting and abusing treatment, gratifying either partner, avoiding having the patient work in more quiet, less interactive ways? Might such active and interactive treatments circumvent or occlude unconscious process? All these questions appeared in various forms in early reactions to relational ideas. But these questions also came from younger candidates and students interested in learning about relational theory and not finding it easy to know what to do.