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CONTEXTUALIZING SELF PSYCHOLOGY
AND RELATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

BIDIRECTIONAL INFLUENCE AND PROPOSED SYNTHESIS*

This paper is in response to an invited symposium addressing the impact that relational psychoanalysis has had on other psychoanalytic traditions and, specifically with regard to myself, on self psychology. This, of course, is an extremely complex and difficult question—even more so because the development of relational psychoanalysis and the ongoing evolution of self psychology have been occurring on a concurrent timeline. While we can focus on the correspondences and differences between relational and contemporary self-psychological theories, influence is probably bi-directional and, therefore, very difficult to assess. Inasmuch as classical self psychology predates relational psychoanalysis, it naturally leads to the reverse question: How did Kohut’s self psychology contribute to the development of relational psychoanalysis?

What is “relational psychoanalysis”? Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) first introduced the term to define a fundamental shift that had occurred in the field of psychoanalysis evidenced in the conceptual similarity among a number of contemporary theories that radically departed from the drive/structure model. In contrast to drive/structure models in which drives are central in psychological life, relational theories posit that “relations with others constitute the fundamental building blocks of mental life” (p. 3). Simultaneously and independently, Arwood and Stolorow (1984) introduced their concept of intersubjectivity to designate the intersubjective fields that are formed by the intersections of two or more subjectivities. Intersubjective and relational fields are equivalent concepts, both capturing the embeddedness of the individual within an intersubjective or relational field (matrix). In contrast to the classical model with its

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constitutional (drives) and intrapsychic emphasis, relational and intersubjective models posit that normal and pathological psychological development, transference, and therapeutic action all emerge within and are affected by relational interactive systems (Beebe, Jaffe & Lachmann, 1992; Fosshage, 1992, 1995a; Greenberg, 1995). This ongoing paradigmatic shift from intrapsychic to relational field models is, in part, anchored in a second paradigmatic change from positivistic to relativistic science, or from objectivism to constructivism (Hoffman, 1998). The basic experimental discovery in particle physics, formulated in Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, is that the act of observation influences that which is observed. This discovery spurred a new conceptualization of field theory, applied to sciences at large, in which observer and observed, rather than viewed as functioning independently, are seen as interactionally influencing one another. A host of theorists across psychoanalysis have been contributing to these paradigmatic changes with profound ramifications for our understanding and participation in the psychoanalytic arena.

The term “relational psychoanalysis” has come to be used with two distinct meanings. First, relational psychoanalysis, as first coined by Greenberg and Mitchell (1983), is used broadly to refer to a group of psychoanalytic approaches that are essentially relational, as defined above, and include interpersonal, object relations, self psychology, intersubjectivity theory, and various integrations. Second, following the publication of Mitchell’s *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis* (1988), the term Relational psychoanalysis (“caps” will be used to denote this meaning) is employed more narrowly (and somewhat confusingly) to refer to the theoretical and clinical contributions emerging from within a relatively cohesive group of principally American psychoanalysts. These theorists have been especially influenced by object relations, interpersonal, and feminist theories. For a few (for example, Aron, 1996; Ghent, 1990), self psychology also has been noted as influential. Among the foundational authors (this is not a complete list) are Stephen Mitchell, Jay Greenberg, Neil Altmann, Lewis Aron, Jessica Benjamin, Philip Bromberg, Jody Davies, Muriel Dimen, Emmanuel Ghent, Adrienne Harris, Irwin Hoffman, Stuart Pizer, Charles Spezzano, and Donnel Stern.

Whether or not self psychology is a relational model has been a matter of considerable debate. Aron (1996) suggests that “each of today’s most popular relational approaches began as a one-person psychology” and not as “fully developed two-person psychologies” (p. 53). Certainly this is true for self psychology. Emerging out of a classical tradition, Kohut initially anchored his self and selfobject formulations in drive and energy theory. While retaining Freud’s drive/structure model, he proposed a second libido, a narcissistic libido, and a complementary line of development for narcissism. On the basis of Kohut’s work up to 1982, Greenberg and Mitchell assessed Kohut’s model to be a “mixed model” in that it contained both drive and relational features. Kohut was, however, a theorist in transition, and by his last book, *How Does Analysis Cure?* (1984), he had, save for a few remnants, fully extricated himself from drive theory in his development of a comprehensive theory of self psychology.

Transitioning out of classical psychoanalysis, Kohut and the classical self psychologists were in fact wary of viewing self psychology as a relational or two-person model (Goldberg, 1986a, 1986b). For Kohut, “relational” meant interpersonal psychoanalysis with all its connotations of being merely a social psychology (Bacal & Newman, 1990)—that is, focusing solely on externally apparent interpersonal interactions.” American Relational authors have tended to view self psychology, particularly in its “classical” or earlier form, as a mixed model and not as a fully developed relational model. Their arguments have centered on three factors: (1) the presence of drive-related conceptualizations in Kohut’s earlier theories; (2) his emphasis on constitutional factors; (3) his concept of selfobject, which is interpreted as referring to deriving a functional capacity from the other rather than reflective of a dyadic relationship with a separate other.

In my view, Kohut’s most fully developed theory of self psychology is a relational model (Fosshage, 1992). All relational models posit constitutional factors—they vary in terms of degree and content. Kohut posits a self striving “to realize its nuclear program” (that is, a self-realization motivational model and a program of the self) to be the core constitutional factors (Kohut, 1984, p. 42). While the American Relational theorists recognize the importance of biology (Mitchell, 1988), their description of constitutional factors is more limited, centering on fundamental strivings to attach (attachment motivation) (Mitchell, 1988, 1990) and a developmental requisite to experience the “other” as a separate person (Benjamin, 1988, 1990).

Kohut’s formulation that development and maintenance of the self occurs within a “self-selfobject matrix” (hereafter referred to as a selfobject matrix) places an individual squarely within a relational field, addressing a particular dimension of self/relational experience. “Self-selfobject rela-
tionships” in the psychological sphere are likened to oxygen in the biological sphere (Kohut, 1984, p. 47), making one kind (or dimension) of relationships central to normal and pathological development, transference, and therapeutic action.

Selfobject relationships, certainly from a contemporary self-psychological perspective, do involve separate people. Hoffman (1983), however, argues that Kohut’s conception of selfobject transference is not a “social” or two-person model because it is based on a lack of self and object differentiation. Hoffman’s assessment is based on Kohut’s initial division between narcissistic and object-relational lines of development and, in addition, on Hoffman’s assumption that all selfobject ties involve an archaic merger, that is, lacking self and object differentiation (Fosshage, 1992, 1994). By 1977, Kohut was eschewing the division between narcissistic and object-relational development. Moreover, apart from an archaic merger at the beginning of development, Kohut assumed self and object differentiation in all other selfobject experience—making it then, using Hoffman’s criterion, a relational (self with other) model. Subsequently, contemporary self psychologists have generally accepted Stern’s (1985) proposition that self and object differentiation exists at birth, making Kohut’s concept of primary archaic merger no longer viable in portraying an early psychological state. The term “archaic merger” is still used by some contemporary self psychologists to refer phenomenologically to a type of psychological experience in which the clarity of boundaries between self and other diminishes. These experiences can either be vitalizing (for example, romantic and spiritual experiences) or devitalizing (for example, a loss of sense of self through the domination of the other).

While the one- and two-person constituents of Kohut’s model are comparable to other relational theories, his model accents, more than American Relational theory, pre-wired components. The relative balance of constitutional and relational factors in Kohut’s model corresponds most closely with Winnicott’s and Guntrip’s relational theories.

Because developments in contemporary self psychology (including for the moment intersubjectivity theory) have been occurring on the same time line as those within American Relational psychoanalysis, theorists of both approaches have been contributing to, as well as integrating, the paradigmatic shift to relational theory. Within contemporary self psychology we find a range of theories, some that offer a more singular relational emphasis and some that, in addition, attempt to identify hard-wired factors. For example, Atwood and Stolorow (1984) offer the concept of “intersubjective field” as a broader rubric to include all dimensions of subjective experience in contrast to Kohut’s more singular focus on the selfobject dimension. On a nature-nurture continuum these authors are more similar to Mitchell in the predominant emphasis on the intersubjective or relational field. Beebe and Lachmann (2002) apply findings from infant research to inform us about the development of “interaction structures” within a dyadic systems framework. Within an interaction systems model, Bacal (1998) focuses on “the specificity of selfobject experience in therapeutic relatedness” (p. 141). Shane, Shane, and Gales (1998) delineate the “self-transforming” and “interpersonal-sharing” (what Stern, 1985, calls “intersubjective relatedness”) dimensions of relational experience. Lichtenberg (1989), along with coauthors Lachmann and myself (1992, 1996), posit constitutional factors in the form of five needs and innate response patterns that emerge within and are shaped contextually through relational experience to become, generally speaking, functional or dysfunctional motivational systems.

When using the term “relational psychoanalysis” to include a range of relational theories, classical self psychology with its emphasis on the selfobject matrix contributed to the paradigmatic shift to relational theory. For example, Kohut’s writings contributed to a shift of emphasis within relational theory (in its broadest sense) from a singular focus on interpretation to the inclusion of cocreation of developmentally needed relational experiences (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 366). When using the term “Relational psychoanalysis” more narrowly to refer to the American Relational theorists, contemporary theories of self psychology stand in contrast and provide the opportunity of comparison. Within this latter context, speculation is possible about bi-directional influences or conjunctions in formulations arrived at independently.

Two distinct meanings of the term “relational psychoanalysis” have engendered different receptions to self psychology from American Relational authors. When relational psychoanalysis is used as a broad rubric, Relational authors more easily embrace self psychology, particularly its contemporary developments, as a relational model. When contrasting self psychology with American Relational theory, the Relational authors differ, but tend to be critical in their assessment of self psychology. For example, Aron (1996) and Black (1987) integrate aspects of self psychology into their relational thinking. In contrast, Mitchell (1988, 1990, 1993, 1997), and even more extremely, Bromberg (1989) delineate their sharp differences and criticisms of self psychology. Some of the criticisms are
based on Kohut's earliest theories and are not in keeping with either his later thought or contemporary developments in self psychology, while others are based, in my judgment, on clear misunderstandings. Some criticisms, however, highlight substantive points of contrast to relational theory. Making the situation even more complex, over time Mitchell, in collaboration with Black (Mitchell & Black, 1995), appeared to become more receptive to self psychology, particularly its contemporary developments. For example, Mitchell (1997) saw important elements in common between contemporary interpersonal theory, object relations, and self psychology. He identifies these common elements to be “the emphasis on the patient's subjective experience, the cultivation of the implicit creativity in the patient's own individuality and unique experience, the role of the analyst as instrument for an expansion of the self-experience of the patient” (p. 96). Hoffman has also been sharply critical of self psychology; yet, while not explicitly acknowledging self psychology, Hoffman (1998) comes to view affirmation as fundamentally important in the analytic relationship, arriving at an understanding that corresponds with the centrality of mirroring selfobject experience within self psychology.¹

In consideration of these complexities, I have for the purposes of this paper selected the following three fundamental issues that have served as nodal points of controversy and divergence between self psychologists and Relational theorists: (1) listening-experiencing perspectives; (2) the concept of self; (3) therapeutic action, focusing on the theories of change and the analyst's participation. I hope to shed some light on these issues as they have evolved within self psychology and as they have been addressed and assessed by Relational theorists. I will assess influence in either direction when possible. I will attempt to highlight the differential contributions of self psychologists and Relational theorists and will propose how the contributions of each can be integrated, specifically with regard to using different listening-experiencing perspectives and addressing different forms of relatedness, to create a more powerful, comprehensive clinical approach.

One caveat before beginning: each of us gravitates toward and develops a theory and practice that resonates deeply with our subjective experience. For this reason, it is difficult for all of us to really know, to have a “feel” for psychoanalytic approaches other than the one we practice. Moreover, to “get” another approach requires extensive reading and living and breathing it within a community where a good deal of communication takes place verbally. In addition, each approach houses a wide range of differences in theory and practice, creating more confusion. Hence, misunderstandings from the “outside,” not to mention from the “inside,” are inevitable and frequent.

Just as the analyst’s subjectivity is always involved, so is, of course, the subjectivity of an author. I think it relevant to add a brief personal note regarding my involvement in these theoretical movements. Early in my life I had developed an interest in Jung, especially his self-actualizing motivational model and concept of self. While classically trained from 1968 to 1972, I gravitated to Guntrip, Winnicott, and Balint. Kohut's first book in 1971 did not initially capture me because his contributions, although clearly significant, were, for me (who had never accepted Freud's drive model), far too embedded in drive and energy theory. I became captivated, however, with his second book and by the evolving theory of self psychology. In 1985 I was invited to become a member of the International Council of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology of which I am currently the president-elect (as of April, 2002). In 1987 I was invited to join the faculty of the Independent Orientation of the New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis where I taught self psychology. In 1988, Emmanuel Ghent and Stephen Mitchell invited Philip Bromberg, Bernard Friedland, and me to establish the Relational Track at N.Y.U. The Relational Track was envisioned to represent, as the five of us did, various relational models, including object relations, interpersonal, self psychology, and the emergent American Relational theory. I have, thus, “lived” within the ongoing developments in self psychology, intersubjectivity theory, and Relational theory, and have personally experienced the invigorating, stimulating, and at times, maddening tugs and pulls of these theoretical and political psychoanalytic worlds.

A comparative study of psychoanalytic theories requires understanding

¹ Hoffman (1998) describes a meaningful analytic goal, “one that helps to build or construct our patients’ views of themselves as creative agents and as persons ultimately deserving of love” (p. 85). His descriptions correspond with Kohut’s emphasis on the “glimpse in the mother’s eye” and the sense of personal agency. Yet, he portrays self psychologists to be “empathic selfobjects” (perhaps like mechanical functionaries) rather than separate people in the analytic relationship with their own dispositions and values. His argument appears to be based on two mistaken notions: first, that a self psychologist attempts to be empathic through eliminating his or her own subjectivity—an issue addressed in detail in the section on listening-experiencing perspectives; and, second, his assumption (already addressed) that selfobjects do not involve separate people but entail an archaic merger.
of the particular contexts of each of the theorists and their emergent theories. For Kohut, classical psychoanalysis, specifically drive theory, ego psychology, and classical technique, served as a point of departure for all of his writings and heavily influenced the beginnings of self psychology. To reiterate, Kohut's (1971) initial formulations on narcissism were both drive and energy based. In his Restoration of the Self (1977), Kohut articulated a more revolutionary, more fully developed theory of self psychology: drive-structure theory was eschewed and the development and maintenance of the self became the overarching developmental and motivational model. Kohut's most detailed and final formulation of his views of therapeutic action appears in his posthumously published book, How Does Analysis Cure? (1984).


Stolorow and Atwood, and subsequently with Brandchaft and, more recently, Orange, further elaborated their theory of intersubjectivity during approximately the same time frame as Mitchell elaborated his relational theory. Within a broadened overarching theoretical framework of intersubjectivity, these authors integrated and contributed to contemporaneous developments in self psychology. Stolorow and Atwood's Faces in a Cloud (1979) set the stage for their first book on intersubjectivity theory, Structures of Subjectivity (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984), followed by Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach (Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood, 1987), Contexts of Being (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992), and Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice (Orange, Atwood & Stolorow, 1997).

Listening-Experiencing Perspectives

In keeping with sciences at large and initiated by Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in particle physics, over the past fifty years psychoanalysis has been undergoing a paradigmatic change from positivist to relativistic science. As a consequence, we can no longer view psychoanalysts as "objectively" observing, for as analysts perceive, they variably shape and organize their perceptions. Analysts construct both perceptually and interactionally. In keeping with the integration of this change in paradigms, the epistemology for many, though not all, psychoanalysts, has fundamentally shifted from objectivism to constructivism.

In light of this change in paradigms, the question arises as to whether or not we can describe psychoanalysts using experientially (not epistemologically) different listening-experiencing perspectives. I refer to listening-experiencing perspectives to capture our current understanding that all perceptions (listening) are mediated through the analyst's experience and subjectivity.

Kohut formulated and designated the empathic mode of observation to be the fundamental listening perspective for psychoanalysis. For self psychology this listening perspective became central. American Relational theorists, in turn, have been critical of Kohut's formulation. Apart from their substantial contributions to constructivism (Hoffman, 1998; Stern, 1997), Relational theorists, except for Bromberg, do not tend to address directly the issue of listening perspectives. Yet, I believe that there is an identifiable listening-experiencing perspective often evident in their clinical work—what I have called the "other-centered listening/experiencing perspective" (Fosshage, 1995b, 1997). While attempting to contextualize these developments, I address Kohut's concept of empathic mode of observation, assess the Relational theorists' criticisms, describe the other-centered perspective that Relationists clinically make use of, and propose an integration of these two, in addition to a third, perspectives.

Empathic Mode of Observation

Kohut (1959, 1982) formulated the empathic mode of observation to update psychoanalytic epistemology in keeping with the new paradigm of relativistic science (Fosshage, 1992). In so doing, he directly challenged the standard practice of psychoanalytic listening that encouraged the analyst to dismiss crucial features of the patient's articulated experience in favor of his or her own assumed objective knowledge about the unconscious and latent meanings of the patient's articulations. Kohut (1982) recognized "the relativity of our perceptions of reality and . . . the relativity of the framework of ordering concepts that shape our observations and explanations" (p. 400) and that "the field that is observed, of necessity, includes the observer" (Kohut, 1984, p. 41)
that was also made by the father of interpersonal analysis, H.S. Sullivan, 1953). Kohut, in turn, proposed to replace “objective observation” with an analyst’s consistent use of empathy and vicarious introspection for inquiry and understanding. The empathic mode of observation refers to a listening-experiencing stance designed to understand as best as one can, through affect resonance and vicarious introspection, the analysand’s experience from within the frame of reference of the analysand.

In his formulation of the empathic mode, Kohut attempted to bring the patient’s subjective experience more directly into a clinical process that had heretofore been too commandeered by the analyst’s point of view. So central became the empathic mode that Kohut (1977) designated it as the method by which the field of psychoanalysis itself is defined (p. 302).

Despite his relativistic scientific perspective, Kohut retained a residue of objectivism in his term “mode of observation” (which Lichtenberg, 1984, renamed “mode of perception”) and in his claim on several occasions that such empathy “is in essence neutral and objective” (Kohut, 1980, p. 483). Relativists (Mitchell, 1993; Hoffman, 1998) and intersubjectivists (Stolorow, Atwood & Orange, 1999) have rightly objected to descriptions that imply the analyst’s empathetic listening is unmediated through the analyst’s subjectivity—what Stolorow, Atwood, and Orange (1999) have referred to as “a doctrine of immaculate perception” (p. 386).

Undoubtedly the remnants of objectivism in Kohut, perhaps combined with unfettered enthusiasm on the part of some self psychologists, initially overreached with philosophically unfounded claims for the empathic stance. Relativists (Aron, 1996; Hoffman, 1991, 1998; Mitchell, 1993, 1997; Renik, 1993; Stern, 1997), intersubjectivists (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992; Stolorow, Atwood & Orange, 1999), and contemporary self psychologists (Fosshage, 1992, 1994; Lichtenberg, Lachmann & Fosshage, 1992; 1996; Slavin & Kriegman, 1992) have all contributed to the further development of a constructivist perspective. As one of four principles of relational psychoanalysis, Greenberg (2001) writes, “there is a broad consensus that detached objectivity is a myth” (p. 363). In my view, this is a point of convergence among all three groups of theorists. In the development of a constructivist perspective, I personally have been influenced by Kohut, self psychologists, relationists, and intersubjectivists as well as developments in philosophy of science.

With regard to self psychology, however, Relational critics have continued to focus on Kohut’s original remnants of objectivism despite contemporary self psychologists’ subsequent philosophical clarifications (Lichtenberg, 1984; Fosshage, 1992, 1994). For example, Mitchell (1997) attributes a constructivist perspective to the contemporary interpersonal analyst in the latter’s awareness that “[the analyst’s understanding of the patient’s point of view is always mediated through the analyst’s point of view” (p. 97). In contrast, he describes the self psychologist’s “role in locating and helping the patient express his own experience [as involving] a suspension of the analyst’s own subjective experience and an effort to listen and to empathize from what the analyst understands to be the ‘patient’s point of view’” (p. 96, italics added). Mitchell ascribes an objectivist legacy to self psychologists’ perspective, for “suspension of the analyst’s own subjective experience” is, from a constructivist perspective, impossible—all perceptions are filtered through an analyst’s subjectivity. Self psychologists (as all analysts using the empathic mode) do not suspend but actively use their subjective experience, through processes of affect resonance and vicarious introspection, wherein empathically listening and inquiring. In 1992 I described the relativity of the empathic stance: “Although the empathic listening stance is designed ‘to hear’ as well as possible from within the vantage point of the analysand, this is clearly a relative matter, for what is heard is always variability shaped by the analyst” (p. 22). This is a constructivist perspective.

Within the clinical rather than philosophical arena, the variability in shaping, of course, is critically important, for it contributes substantially to whether or not an analysand “feels heard.” Constructivists, however, infrequently note variability in shaping—probably because an attempt to assess the shaping influence is easily viewed as approaching objectivism. As constructivists, however, we do attempt to assess the variability in shaping in the analytic arena, implicitly or explicitly assessing who is contributing what to the analysand’s and analyst’s respective perceptions, experiences, and their interaction. Aron (1996) and Teicholz (1992) have aptly described this as a moderate relativistic position and Orange (1995) addresses this variability in shaping through her concept of perspectival realism. Hoffman (1998) critically suggests, however, that to think of the

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2 Critics have often derided that self psychologists do not use their countertransference. This emanates from a fundamental misunderstanding that listening and experiencing from an empathic perspective does not flow through the analyst’s subjectivity—an impossibility! In my view, we all, as analysts, use our subjective experience or countertransference to inform us about our analysands—for what else is there? In addition, I believe that experiential shifts into different listening-experiencing perspectives influence our subjective experience or countertransference, account for some of our differences in experiencing patients, and serve as different starting points for interpretive focus (see Fosshage, 1995b).
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with the patient—what it feels like to be the other person. When we experience an analysand as hostile, controlling, loving, or appealing, we are experiencing the analysand from the vantage point of the other in a relationship with the analysand. This information about the analysand and the interaction, more frequently used directly as a basis for exploration or interpretation by interpersonalists, object relationists, and Relationists, informs us about how the analysand impacts others and about the analysand's patterns of relating. Racker's (1968) concordant and complementary countertransferences can be viewed as analysts' experiences emanating from empathic and other-centered perspectives respectively.

The advantage of the empathic mode is that it positions the analyst to attempt to hear more easily how the analysand experiences his or her world and, when communicated, implicitly validates that experience (note the correspondence with Bromberg's description above). To attempt to listen and experience empathically, however, is quite complex, for an analyst still must differentiate as to what are the foreground and background features of the analysand's articulated experience. The advantage of the other-centered mode is that the information derived can be useful in illuminating how others may experience the analysand and the analysand's interactional patterns. In addition, the other-centered mode may provide important information about an analysand's breaking out of old patterns and expansively establishing footholds for new ways of relating.

The disadvantage of other-centered listening-experiencing is that the analyst's other-centered experience, when communicated, may be too distant from the analysand's experience for the analysand meaningfully to appropriate. Relatedly, an analysand may not easily recognize and validate the analyst's articulated other-centered experience, leaving the analyst suspended as to the meaningfulness of his or her intervention. On the other hand, the disadvantage of using the empathic mode exclusively to provide interpretive focus is to deprive an analysand of direct feedback on how others may experience the analysand, potentially reinforcing a solipsistic world.

The empathic and other-centered listening-experiencing perspectives are modes of trying to apprehend what an analysand is saying and how an analysand is interacting. Our listening-experiencing perspectives, theoretical models, as well as other aspects of our subjectivities, shape our experience of an analysand (countertransference). Self psychology has increased our awareness of the importance and power of the empathic mode; interpersonalists, object-relational analysts, and Relationists, while

analyst's and analysand's contributions is "dichotomous thinking" and "part and parcel of the objectivist view that, in principle, the analyst can discover precisely" (p. 26, my italics) the contributions of each. In my view, the use of the adverb "precisely" reveals an objectivist position and creates a fallacious argument. Rather than "precisely," we do the best we can to ferret out the contributions of each. Hoffman himself describes in another passage the analyst's attempt "to struggle collaboratively with the patient to arrive at a sense of what is taking place both interpersonally and intrapsychically" (p. xxii)—what, in my view, is fundamental to psychoanalytic work.

In an effort to understand analysands' experience, analysts in general variably attempt to listen and experience analysands from an empathic perspective. Self psychologists note the importance of the analysand's experience and perspective and, apart from recent emendations (Lichtenberg, 1984; Fosshage, 1995b, 1997) attempt to listen and experience consistently from the empathic vantage point. Bromberg (1989) asserts that his "interpersonal listening stance" contrasts with that of self psychology. He writes, "the patient must be able to see himself through the eyes of the analyst as an ongoing aspect of feeling himself validated and understood in the terms he sees himself" (p. 277). While his description is, perhaps, slightly more analyst-centered (for example, "through the eyes of the analyst"), his depiction of the patient's experience, in my view, closely resonates with the experience patients describe when an analyst is listening empathically.

What other listening-experiencing vantage points are there? While Lichtenberg (1984) has also described alternatives, I here focus on my own work (Fosshage, 1995b, 1997) that, I believe, provides an avenue of integrating the contributions of self psychologists and Relationists concerning how to listen to and experience analysands.

I have proposed that analysts experientially oscillate between the empathic and, what I have called, the other-centered listening-experiencing stances (this formulation emerged out of my personal clinical experience, combined with listening to others, including self psychologists' and Relationists' clinical work). The other-centered perspective refers to an analyst's attempt to experience the analysand as "an other" in a relationship

3 When listening to another person analytically or socially, I believe that our experience reveals a natural oscillation between these two listening-experiencing perspectives. The analyst-analysand interaction contributes to this oscillation. For example, an analysand's intense affect-laden expression, whether love or anger, directed toward the analyst tends to trigger what it feels like to be the other, the other-centered perspective.
not labeling their perspective, have increased our awareness of the usefulness of the other-centered listening-experiencing perspective. In my view, the timely use of experience derived from both listening-experiencing perspectives facilitates and deepens inquiry and provides a more comprehensive understanding of both analysand and analyst. An overriding use of the empathic mode, whether in the foreground or background, helps us assess how and when to use information from these respective perspectives therapeutically and helps to guide us in the interaction.

With this said, I wish to add a third listening-experiencing perspective. Although substantially different, the empathic and other-centered perspectives are each used to focus on and understand the analysand. While analysis entails a primary focus on the analysand, what may come to the forefront for the analyst is his or her own perspective that, rather than emanating out of an empathic or other-centered focus, is more reflective of the analyst’s subjective experience as a separate person. This third perspective I call the analyst’s self perspective, that is, the analyst’s self-experience. An analyst’s articulation of his or her self-perspective may be therapeutic in a variety of clinical situations. For example, while an analysand may be in the grips of negative self feelings, the analyst, in addition to empathically understanding the analysand’s negative self feelings and their developmental origins, may perceive the analysand quite differently. Following exploration of the analysand’s negative self-percepts and their origins, an analyst on occasion may juxtapose his or her subjective experience of the analysand quite directly both to illuminate further the analysand’s negative percepts as well as to provide contrasting input accruing to the gradual establishment of new percepts. In another clinical situation, an analysand may be focused on the analyst’s subjectivity, the analyst’s reactions to the analysand, or to an interaction between them. It may become critically important for the analyst to share his or her subjective experience to facilitate exploration of who’s contributing what to the analysand’s perceptions as well as to deepen the relational encounter (see Fosshage, 1997 for a clinical illustration). During moments of intersubjective relatedness, juxtaposition of the subjective experience of each can highlight differences and similarities between two subjectivities that is growth promoting (Benjamin, 1990; Bromberg, 1998).

Empathic Responsiveness

Some Relational theorists erroneously conflate the empathic mode of perception, which for Kohut (1982) was a way of taking in, an “informa-

tion-gathering activity,” (p. 397) with an analyst’s subsequent response. For example, Bromberg (1989) states: “the defining element of [the empathic-introspective] stance is its dedication to full empathic responsiveness to the patient’s subjective experience” (p. 282, my italics). Kohut (1982) most likely contributed to this confusion in noting that the analysand can experience an analyst’s empathic inquiry as a therapeutic response and that empathy can refer to a “powerful emotional bond between people” (p. 397). In addition, Kohut (1977) recognized the need for what he first called an “average empathic responsiveness” (p. 252), subsequently shortened to “empathic responsiveness” (p. 253). Contrasting empathic responsiveness with the “neutrality” of the classical stance, Kohut used the term to address the baseline and requisite affective involvement and responsiveness of the analyst.

Bromberg (1989), however, interprets “empathic responsiveness to the patient’s subjective experience” as limiting for the analyst. In his view, an analyst thus oriented becomes focused on “how it feels to be the subject rather than the target of the patient’s needs and demands” (p. 286). Bromberg is partially correct in that the empathic stance (not empathic responsiveness) is aimed to understand the patient’s subjective experience. He seems, however, not to understand the full intent of an empathic stance, which is not to try to take in only some of the patient’s subjective experience, but to be open to the full range of affective experience. In my view, if a self psychologist empathically understood that the analysand needed to hear what it was like to be the target, then the analyst would need to respond accordingly, but could do so only on the basis of utilizing his or her other-centered experience.

Mitchell (1988, 1993) and Bromberg (1989) have also criticized empathic responsiveness as a generic mode of behaving, a rigid, mechanical technique that limits authentic engagement. Hoffman (1998) points out, however, that any technique can fall prey to standardization and mechanization whether it is classical technique, empathic inquiry, or self-disclosure. From inside self psychology, Bacal and Newman (1990), along with Slavin and Kriegman (1992) have warned about the possible mechanization of empathic inquiry. Bromberg (1994), however, has rightly warned of the same possibility for self-disclosure.

In contrast to a generic or mechanized behaving, which for Kohut dominated the then current classical analyst stance, Kohut (1977) describes the requirement of the analyst’s deep emotional engagement and participation in defining average empathic responsiveness
as the responsiveness to be expected, on an average from persons who
have devoted their life to helping others with the aid of insights obtained
via the empathic immersion into their inner life. Although this average
empathic responsiveness lies within a broad band in the spectrum of possi-
bilities and allows many individual variations, it is not—in principle—an
approximation of the functions of a psychologically programmed computer
that restricts its activities to giving correct and accurate interpretations...
the analyst must not try to function like a well-programmed computer rests
on two premises; that the analyst's responses require the participation of
the deep layers of his personality and... that the responses of a computer
would not constitute an average expectable environment for the analysand. [p. 252]

In recognizing the importance of the analyst's "presence" and deep emo-
tional involvement, Kohut contributed to what the Relationists (Brom-
berg, 1998; Frank, 1999; Mitchell, 1997; Renik, 1998) and contemporary
self psychologists (Bacal, 1998; Fosshage, 1992, 1997; Orange, 1995;
Slavin & Krieman, 1992) have subsequently emphasized as the impor-
tance of the analyst's authentic (affect-grounded) engagement. Empathic
responsiveness—that is, responding on the basis of empathic under-
standing of an analysand—cannot, by definition, be rigid, mechanical,
or generic, for it must be open and fluid and take into account the unique
subjectivities of both analysand and analyst and their interaction.

To respond empathically requires an analyst to be authentic in the
sense of being affectively grounded in both listening and responding.
Relationists use the term "authentic" to refer to the use their affective
experience (whether, in my terms, it is based in an empathic, other-
centered, or analyst's self-perspective) for purposes of better defining
the transference-countertransference interaction. While their experience
could be based on a single or a combination of these perspectives, the
Relationists' clinical reports more often describe the analysts' experience
from the other-centered perspective.

Apart from misunderstandings, I believe that Relational theorists find
themselves restricted by self psychology's emphasis on the empathic
mode, for they often listen and respond on the basis of the other-
centered listening-experiencing perspective. In the face of emotionally
poignant interactions, Relationists recognize and often directly use their
subjective reactions as the other in the relationship with the analysand
(for example, Davies, 2002). Alternatively, self psychologists tend to use
their subjective reactions of affect resonance and vicarious introspec-
tion (that is, the empathic perspective) to interpret or inquire further in
attempts to understand their analysands' experiences. In addition to these
two primary listening-experiencing perspectives, the analyst's self-
perspective is a third, used both by Relationists and contemporary self
psychologists to deepen or illuminate the interaction. Each experiential
perspective highlights certain types of information. Privileging one or the
other becomes problematic only when used rigidly. Investigation of
these different perspectives, responses, and co-created moments will
hopefully, become a future area of bi-directional influence.

Kohut contributed to the increasing range of analytically acceptable
responses that Relationists, intersubjectivists, and contemporary self psy-
chologists have brought to fruition. To capture and embrace this range,
have suggested the term "facilitative responsiveness." Similarly, Mitchell
(1997) describes a wide range of analytic participation.

[S]elf-reflective responsiveness to the patient is a highly cultivated skill... (that involves hearing and following different levels of meaning at
the same time... learning to track and engage in, simultaneously, different
dimensions of thought, affective response, and self-organization... the freedom
to respond variously at different times and to be able to draw on a wide
variety of potential responses in my repertoire when it seems useful. [p.
194]

Concept of Self

Self psychologists and Relational theorists differ in their conceptualiza-
tions of the self and the nature-nurture mix in its development. While
both groups of theorists delineate the profound formative influence of
relational contexts, self psychologists, as compared to the Relationists
(except perhaps for those who are more influenced by Winnicott and
Guntrip), place greater emphasis on the participatory role of constitution
al factors in development. In the relative weighting of the nature-

Bacal (1985, 1998) replaced the term "empathic responsiveness" with "optimal responsive-
ness" to enlarge the range of responses and to assess their specific therapeutic value. I
(1997) subsequently offered the term "facilitative responsiveness." Optimal and facilitative
responsiveness more broadly include responses based on various listening perspectives.
In addition, limiting the concept of empathy to a listening-experiencing perspective (Kohut's
first meaning) would eliminate the frequent and confusing conflation of the two
different meanings (listening perspective and a type of response) of empathy.
nurture mix, the intersubjectivists, similar to the Relationists, more singularly emphasize the shaping influence of intersubjective contexts. Let us take a closer look at the theories, influences, and controversies.

Kohut (1984) placed at the center of psychological development the self striving "to realize" its intrinsic program of action (p. 42) within a "self-selfobject" matrix. The "intrinsic program of action" refers to pre-wired factors, some of which are universal (e.g., mirroring, idealizing, and twinship selfobject needs) and some of which are unique (e.g., talents) all of which contribute to each person's development. Combining one-person and two-person features, Kohut (1977) describes how "the baby's innate potentialities" and "the self-object's expectations converge," possibly forming "the point of origin of the infant's primal, rudimentary self" (p. 99).5

Kohut posited a general developmental direction intrinsic to each individual and delineated possibilities for multiple developmental pathways. Relational critics, however, perceive Kohut's developmental program as overly fixed, insufficiently subject to relational shaping. Whereas Kohut viewed selfobjects as essential for development—indeed, likening their importance to oxygen in the biological sphere—his definition of selfobjects as serving specific functions, a holdover of ego psychology, did not convey to the Relationists that selfobjects might also be, or be experienced as, separate, participating people. Relational critics believe, therefore, that the analyst within self psychology is viewed as only a trigger of selfobject experience, minimizing, in contrast to their view, the participation of the analyst and the analyst's subjectivity (see p. 414 for clarification of the issue of selfobjects as separate persons). Kohut, however, increasingly recognized the importance of the emotional participation of the analyst. Subsequently, Lichtenberg (1991) redefined "selfobject," not to reflect a set of functions performed by the other, but to refer phenomenologically to self-enhancing, vitalizing experience. Not only can the

selfobject dimension be viewed as one dimension of relational experience (Stolorow, 1986), but it can be seen as one dimension of all experience. In this vein, Lichtenberg, with Lachmann and I (1992), have expanded the sources of selfobject experience to include, in addition to attachment, other motivations—for example, exploratory-assertive and psychological regulation of physiological activities—in which relationships may or may not be in experiential foreground. In keeping with the emphasis of coparticipation in the analytic arena, contemporary self psychologists view analysand and analyst as co-creators of selfobject experience for both analysand and analyst (Bacal & Tompson, 1996).

In differentiating Relational theory from the drive model, Mitchell (1988) notes, "In the drive model, 'anatomy is destiny' . . . ; social factors are shaped by inherent, underlying drive pressures. In the Relational model, biology and interpersonal processes constitute 'perpetual cycles of mutual influence' (p. 4). Mitchell (1988, 1993) and other Relational theorists have aimed to capture the fluidity of self-experience and tend to view pre-wired factors as too static and divorced from the shaping influence of ever-changing relational experience. Similarly, Stolorow, Atwood, and Orange (1999) view Kohut as moving from phenomenology where self is "a fluidly evolving dimension of experience taking form within an ongoing contextual matrix" to ontology, where self is reified as "an objectified, supraordinate, agentic entity" (p. 384). These differences are reflected respectively in the self psychologists' conceptualization of a core self and multiple self states and the Relationists' concept of "multiple selves" (Mitchell, 1993; Bromberg, 1994). While "core self and multiple self states" emphasizes continuity as well as variability of self experience, "multiple selves" accent the variability of self-experience within different relational contexts (see Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Vol. 32, No. 4). While Lichtenberg and Lachmann, and I (2002), retain the concept of a cohesive sense of self (the experience of continuity of identity over time), we have also added to the variability of self-experience through our depiction of five motivational systems (pp. 184–185).

While classical self psychologists retain the concept of self, contemporary self psychologists, perhaps influenced by the intersubjectivists and relationists, tend to bypass the knotty problems of what and how much is pre-wired and return to a phenomenologically based term "sense of self," thereby emphasizing the experience of self.

Other debates have emerged concerning constitutional factors. For example, Relationists, in keeping with postmodern sensibilities, wish to es-

5 Kohut was not the first to conceptualize a "self" as entailing constitutional factors and a general developmental trajectory: Jung (1953), Loewald (1960), Winnicott (1965), Guntrip (1971), and, more recently, Bollas (what he calls a personal idiom, 1989) have all similarly posited a self, a "guiding" center unique to each individual. Each theorist has expressed a particular sensibility about an inner guiding core within each individual, an experiential integrity of being, that is fostered or thwarted as well as shaped by relational experience. Loewald (1960) writes, "If the analyst keeps his central focus on this emerging core, he avoids molding the patient in the analyst's own image or imposing on the patient his own concept of what the patient should become" (p. 229). He likens the sensitivity of an analyst to that of a good parent whose recognition of the differences of his or her children (for example, in temperament, talents, activity levels) has a positive developmental effect.
chew posited "essences" in human beings altogether (Teicholz, 1999) and, therefore, are not disposed to accept Kohut's proposition of pre-wired selfobject needs. Bromberg (1989) asserts that acceptance of that proposition positions the analyst to "believing you know in advance what [the patient] needs" (p. 283). The same argument, of course, could be made for Bromberg's belief that the patient needs to know from the analyst what it feels like to be the target. Teicholz (1999) also notes this sort of contradiction: "the postmoderns...themselves suggest that the patient needs an actual relationship with a distinctive other...Thus, the moderate postmoderns seem to have changed the content of what the analyst can 'know' but have not totally escaped a knowing position for the analyst" (pp. 242–243, italics added). In my view, any theory—whether a theory of selfobject needs or a theory about other types of relational needs—can sensitize an analyst and be useful in understanding an analysand or, if used rigidly, can prejudice an analyst at the expense of understanding an analysand.

In extricating psychoanalysis from a biologically based drive theory and replacing it with the centrality of relational experience, all relational (broad use of the term) theorists have made invaluable contributions in bringing to fruition a line of psychoanalytic thought with regard to relational influence that has vast ramifications for psychoanalytic work. Extensive research and clinical evidence substantiates the profound impact of relational experience. Yet, in the effort to extricate psychoanalysis from drive theory, I believe Relational and intersubjective theorists in their vision of the centrality of relational experience have inadvertently, and understandably, underestimated genetic factors, that now, in light of the accumulating genetic, neuroscientific, and other genetically related research, need to be reconsidered.

Representatives of all three perspectives (for example, Stolorow, 1997; Shane, Shane & Gales, 1997; Ghent, 2002) have recently turned to the employment of nonlinear dynamic systems theory to account for development. They borrow heavily from Thelen and Smith (1994) who, using Edelman's (1992) theory of neuronal group selection, delineate a dynamic systems theory of the development of cognition and action. Sufficiently it to say for our purposes here that dynamic systems theory offers considerable explanatory value for human development, incorporating the features of nonlinearity, emergent properties, and multiple causality. Infant researchers (Sander, 1977; Beebe, Jaffee & Lachmann, 1992), intersubjective, Relational, and contemporary self psychology theorists are all using dynamic systems theory in developing systems interaction models to account for development and analytic interaction (e.g., Fosshage, 1995a; Ghent, 1995, 2002; Greenberg, 1995; Lichtenberg, 1989; Lichtenberg et al., 1992, 2002; Mitchell, 1988, 1997; Stolorow, 1997; Stolorow & Arwood, 1992). While dynamic systems theory is powerful in capturing the complexities of development, including the emergence of properties previously viewed as pre-wired, it does not resolve the nature-nurture dilemma. We still must account for what the baby genetically brings into the system, including the subsequent emergence and activation of pre-wired propensities (Chomsky, 1968; Ogden, 1990; Pinker, 1994, 2002; Slavin & Kriegman, 1992). Toward the end of their comprehensive description of the application of dynamic systems theory to the development of cognition and action, Thelen and Smith (1994), borrowing from Edelman's notion of "values," address constitutional factors, noting pre-wired motivational valences:

Infants come into the world with a rich set of adaptive biases, epigenetically acquired, but having strong selective value. These surely include the motivation to suck and seek nourishment, motivation for contact and warmth, preferences for certain moderate levels of sensory stimulation and preferred dynamics... The basic wiring of the brain, Edelman's primary repertoire, strongly implicates a value component in all processes of learning and memory... Tendencies to do one activity over another can be conceptualized as forces driving behavior toward attractors, the strength of the attractor indicating the strength of the particular motivational valence associated with the stimulus or task space. (pp. 316–317)

Generally speaking, self psychologists and Relational theorists differ in their motivational theories that affect clinical understandings and sensibilities. Self psychologists emphasize strivings to grow, to develop, to actualize. Most Relational thinkers do not directly address or delineate motivational theory in spite of the fact that motivational assumptions are inherent in their work. Substantively influenced by object relations theory, the underlying motivational assumption implicit in their work most often centers on strivings to attach to objects. For example, Ghent (1990), who does address the issue of motivation, writes of "a longing for the birth, or perhaps rebirth, of true self" and "a longing to be known, recognized" (p. 110). While these "longings" could be viewed as developmental strivings, Ghent attributes them to a central object-seeking moti-

All personal motives have a long relational history. If the self is always embedded in relational contexts, either actual or internal, then all important motives have appeared and taken on life and form in the presence and through the reactions of significant others. [p. 134]

While Mitchell focuses on how motives emerge within and are shaped by a relational context, he does not directly address constitutional factors. Greenberg (1991), an exception to other Relational authors, posits a dual motivational model of safety and effectance. In self psychology, Lichtenberg (1989) synthesizes the considerable research evidence for particular genetically-determined motivational “biases.” Lichtenberg (1989) and, subsequently, with Lachmann and me (1992, 1996, 2002) have attempted to delineate how these five pre-wired needs or biases and innate response patterns develop through relational experience into, generally speaking, functional or dysfunctional motivational systems. Most recently, Ghent (2002) has meaningfully readdressed the issue of needs and motivation from a dynamic systems perspective. He writes:

Depending on circumstances in a person’s life, basic needs will develop in unique ways, reflecting (1) the potential talents and skills, as well as handicaps, that were organized on the basis of genetic programming and prenatal experience and (2) the facilitative and thwarting environmental influences in postnatal life. [p. 789]

He concludes “that in all human beings . . . two types of needs, those organized around maintaining homeostatic safety and those that end toward expansion of function, are always operating in some degree of dynamic balance” (p. 799).

The complex issue of constitutional factors keeps reemerging, including with Relational theorists. For example, Davies (2002) recently writes of a pre-wired cognitive process—the “developmental universality of projective/introjective processes between parents and children” (p. 12). While considerable debate surrounds the issue of constitutional factors, some of the most well-known genetically based aspects of human beings that research supports are motivations (Strein, 1985; Emde, 1988a; Lichtenberg, 1989; Greenberg, 1991); temperament (Thomas & Chess, 1977, 1980); self-organizing and self-righting (resilience) capacities (Waddington, 1947; Anthony, 1987; Tolpin, 1986; Lichtenberg, 1989; Fajardo, 1991); cognitive-emotional capacities (Siegel, 1999); self and interactive regulatory capacities (Sander, 1977; Beebe & Lachmann, 2002); innate social behaviors (Pinkert, 1994, 2002; Slavin & Kriegman, 1992) and talents (Kohut, 1984). Specification and inclusion of pre-wired factors in our theories of development enhances our potential to understand as well as to respect and foster the uniqueness of each analysand.

**Therapeutic Action**

**Theory of Change**

Kohut (1984) viewed pathogenesis as emanating principally from a relational thwarting of developmental strivings “to realize the nuclear program of his self” (p. 148). Due to these selfobject failures, analysands enter treatment with both developmental longings for needed selfobject experiences and, at the same time, negative expectations based on past failures, “dreadingly . . . the repetition of the past” (Ornstein, 1974). The conflict between developmental longings and expectations of the replication of selfobject failure is, for self psychology, the basic paradigm for conflict. For Kohut (1984), the object relational transferences emanating from past experience serve as the initial resistances to the emergence of selfobject needs. These object relational transferences need to be interpreted, understood, and worked through before an analysand dares to express selfobject needs.

Relational theorists have inaccurately portrayed that from a self psychological perspective “selfobject needs are primed in the patient all the time, waiting and eager to emerge” (Mitchell, 1997, p. 51) and “the patient’s thwarted developmental needs are poised and ready to be met” (Mitchell, 1990, p. 536) without conflict. In contrast, self psychologists initially recognized that an analysand’s expectations of the repetition of the past creates intense conflict and usually protective (defensive) formations against selfobject needs, preventing access to selfobject needs.

Once selfobject needs emerge and a selfobject transference is estab-
lished, the rupture of the selfobject connection and its repair is, for Kohut, the primary avenue of change. Through interpretive reparation of ruptures, an analysand gradually internalizes the analyst’s selfobject functions. Limited by the then current displacement model of transference, Kohut, however, failed to stress sufficiently the activation of repetitive traumatic themes (what he called the “object relational transferences”) during the rupture periods. This positioned him, in understanding the ruptures, to focus too exclusively on the analyst’s failure in understanding. This limitation perhaps contributed to the Relationists’ misunderstanding that selfobject needs are poised to be responded to. Moreover, these formulations, steeped in ego psychology and its defense concept, were far too programmatic and required, subsequently, recognition of a much more complex interplay between shifting selfobject needs, activation of problematic patterns of organization, and protective operations.

Subsequently, Stolorow and Lachmann (1984-85) delineated two transference dimensions—the repetitive dimension, referring to patterns of organization established on the basis of lived experience, and the selfobject dimension, referring to the developmental seeking of needed selfobject experience. A selfobject rupture occurs when the interaction activates a repetitive traumatic theme (Fosshage, 1994). As Mitchell (1997) noted, this constructivist based, and what I (1994) call, organization model of transference more comprehensively fills out the inevitability and usefulness of ruptures to rework the traumatic themes that are reactivated.

Kohut acknowledged (although only once) in his last book that ongoing selfobject (or vitalizing) experience was also structure building, providing a second avenue of therapeutic change. He writes: “the analyst’s adequately maintained understanding leads to the patient’s increasing realization that, contrary to his experiences in childhood, the sustaining echo of empathic resonance is indeed available in this world” (p. 78). If “an ill-disposed critic” suggests that this sounded like an emotionally corrective experience, Kohut (1984) responds, “So be it” (p. 78). Contemporary self psychologists have elaborated the importance of ongoing selfobject experience in building new, more vitalizing psychological organizations (Bacal, 1985, 1998; Beebe & Lachmann, 2002; Fosshage, 1992, 1997; Lichtenberg, et al., 1996, 2002; Shane, et al., 1998).

In their theory of therapeutic action, Relational theorists (Mitchell, 1993, 1997; Hoffman, 1998; Bromberg, 1998; Stern, 1997) view the analysand as utilizing the now constructive patterns of relating that were established on the basis of past relational experience. In contrast to self psychology’s emphasis of developmental strivings, Mitchell (1990) writes: “New forms of relation are not likely to be immediately possible, nor even really sought, but emerge only through re-experience, reexamination, and resolution of old patterns” (p. 529, italics added). Relational theorists focus on the ubiquitous (Hoffman, 1991; Renik, 1993) repetitive enactments into which analysand and analyst are inevitably drawn. Whereas enactments are dyadic unconscious relational patterns of interaction to which both analysand and analyst contribute, they are, more typically than not, viewed as initiated by the analysand (for example, Bromberg, 2001; Stern, 2001). The focus of the work that brings about therapeutic change centers on analyst and analysand gradually extricating themselves from unconscious repetitive patterns by reflectively becoming aware of the relational interplay and the contributions of each. Both the increased awareness and the analyst-analysand reflective interaction itself aid the analysand in developing new relational patterns and in experiencing the analyst as a new object. Greenberg (2001) points out that some relationists “believe that one enactment simply folds into the next, with systemic change developing even in the absence of any privileged insight into what was intended or even into what happened” (p. 362). To avoid simply replicating enactments and to have a therapeutic effect, however, requires, at the very least, interspersing new types of interaction to create new “implicit relational learning” (Stern, et al., 1998). While these new interactions are positive interactions or enactments (Fosshage, 1995a), Relational theorists, in keeping with their emphasis, tend to reserve the term “enactment” to refer to repetitive problematic interactions.

Contemporary self psychologists and intersubjectivists agree with the Relational theorists’ description of working through repetitive enactments as a central avenue of therapeutic change with joint expansion of awareness (Lichtenberg, et al., 1996)—what contemporary self psychologists view as working with the repetitive dimension of the transference. Theorists of all three groups have contributed to this description, each with the language and coloration of the particular theories employed. The Relationists, integrating neo-Kleinian and object-relational theories, emphasize projective-introjective processes and internal objects. Contemporary self psychologists and intersubjectivists focus, instead, on negative percepts of self and other and negative expectations (patterns of organization) based on lived experience.
All three groups of theorists view aggression as reactive, serving self and interactive regulatory functions (Fosshage, 1998; Harris, 1998; Mitchell, 1998; Lachmann, 2000). While Kohut, in viewing aggression as a breakdown product related to a shattered sense of self, minimized its functional importance, self psychologists subsequently have recognized its important signal and regulatory functions (Lichtenberg, 1989; Stolorow, 1994). If aversiveness or aggression becomes a dominant organization, then it can take on a drive-like “eruptive” quality (Lachmann, 2000) that corresponds more closely with the Relationists’ view of aggression related to trauma.

Emerging out of the different motivational models, contemporary self psychologists and intersubjectivists, in contrast to the Relationists, also emphasize the selfobject dimension of the transference, that is, the analysand’s strivings for developmentally needed selfobject experiences. An analyst must be sufficiently “pulled into” the analysand’s selfobject strivings in order to cocreate needed transformatory experiences (what Stern, 1994, aptly calls the “needed and repeated relationships”). In addition to rupture-repair cycles, ongoing selfobject (vitalizing) experience that often stands in contrast to previous experience and serves as a basis for new percepts of self and other, provides an important avenue for change. Self-psychological literature is replete with clinical examples of new relational experiences (Bacal, 1998; Fosshage, 1992; Shane, et al., 1998; Lichtenberg et al., 2002).

Borrowing from Balint’s (1968) “new beginning” and Winnicott’s (1965) “holding environment,” Relational theorists have also incorporated the importance of new relational experience. Although most Relational theorists emphasize that the new relational experience emerges in the working out of enactments, some (Frank, 1999; Hoffman, 1998) note the importance of new relational experiences that are antedotes to the traumatic experiences of the past. Greenberg (1986) speaks of “the goal of establishing an optimal tension between the patient’s tendency to see the analyst as an old object and his capacity to experience him as a new one” (p. 97). Greenberg, as Kohut, believes the greatest change occurs in rupture-repair cycles. He states, “it is in working through the disruptions of safety (and, thus, in its reestablishment) that the most important progress occurs” (p. 96). Greenberg’s emphasis on safety corresponds with aspects of Kohut’s (1979) description of an idealized selfobject transference and our (Lichtenberg, et al., 1996, 2002) description of the importance of creating a sense of safety.

While both Relationalists and contemporary self psychologists address the repetitive and new relational experiences, the motivational models—developmental strivings for self psychologists and attachment strivings for Relationists—serve as underpinnings for differences in clinical sensibilities. The Relationists tend to focus more exclusively on repetitive enactments; contemporary self psychologists, in addition to the activation of repetitive patterns, are especially alert to analysands’ strivings for developmentally needed selfobject experiences (repetitive and selfobject enactments). While these are substantial differences, convergence in delineating both positive (vitalizing, self-enhancing) as well as negative (repetitive, devitalizing) enactments is occurring, perhaps either independently or through a bi-directional influence.

Analyst’s Participation

The lineage of psychoanalysts who have focused on relational experience, in contrast to insight, as central to therapeutic change have viewed the analyst as participating more fully in the analytic encounter (Balint, 1968; Ferenczi, 1953; Suttie, 1955; Winnicott, 1965). Kohut’s formulations—for example, empathic responsiveness and the analyst’s requisite deep emotional engagement—contributed to this line of thought and to what became, with subsequent contributions and extensions, a radical change in viewing the analyst’s participation. Contemporary self psychologists, intersubjectivists, interpersonalists, object relations theorists, and Relationists have all expanded the view of the analyst’s participation to include the complex subjectivities of both participants and to expand the range of responses in an intricate interactive dance.


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3 Winnicott’s “holding environment” and Bollas’s (1987) “transformational object” have correspondences with Kohut’s concept of archaic mirroring selfobject in addressing the infant’s earliest relationship with mother.
our conceptualization of the complexity of the analytic interaction and the analyst’s participation.

Simultaneously, contemporary interpersonalsists and Relationists have kept expanding the useful expression and revelation of the analyst’s subjectivity in the analytic encounter. Ehrenberg (1992), an interpersonalist, describes “the intimate edge” of the analytic encounter. Amongst the Relationists, Renik (1998) describes the new position of the analyst as “getting real.” Aron (1996) invites an analysand to be curious about the analyst’s subjectivity. Benjamin (1988, 1990) promotes the expression of the analyst’s subjectivity, for recognition of a subjectivity different and separate from one’s own is growth promoting. Hoffman (1994) speaks of those moments when the analyst “throws the book away” and responds in a highly personal way. Relational theorists emphasize the omnipresence of the analyst’s personal influence and the uniqueness of dyad that require “negotiations” to find a way of working together (Fizer, 1992, 1998; Greenberg, 1995). Within the vortex of this change, Greenberg (2001) cautions that Relational analysts have emphasized in their clinical vignettes “the analyst’s risk-taking, engaging patients in a highly personal way that breaks the traditional analytic frame” (p. 359). In my view, the clinical vignettes that illustrate highly personal encounters in analysis, and I certainly include my own vignettes (1997, 1999, 2000), have been necessary in order to extricate us from technical rigidity and role constriction. In addition, these vignettes, in demonstrating the often spontaneous and personal aspects of the encounter, expand our imagination for possible creative and therapeutic responses. Yet, I can well appreciate Greenberg’s caution that a singular focus on the more idiosyncratic encounters neglects the analytic guidelines and frame (albeit changing) that makes possible an analysis. Partially in response to this situation, Lichtenberg, Lachmann, and I (2002) recently focused on the “spirit of inquiry” that we consider to be central to analytic work.

In my view, theorists from all the relational approaches, as well as some contemporary classical analysts (for example, Jacobs, 1993, 2001; McLaughlin, 1995, 2000), are contributing to the increased awareness of the complexity of the interaction and the expansion of the analyst’s participation. Recognizing that anything we do verbally or nonverbally, consciously or unconsciously, is a communication and reveals something about us, we now struggle consciously about what to self-disclose, what to communicate in an effort to facilitate an analysand’s development (Bacal, 1998; Lichtenberg, Lachmann & Fosshage, 2002). We may choose, for example, to disclose love for a patient (Shane, Shane & Gales, 1998; Fosshage, 1999) or “erotic countertransference” feelings (Davies, 1994) to deepen and expand analytic engagement. In the nonverbal realm, we are now reassessing the meanings and communicative value of physical touch—a handshake, hand-holding, a hug—occurrences that previously were never talked about (e.g., Ruderman, Shane & Shane, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000; Shane, Shane & Gales, 2000; Fosshage, 2000).

None of our responses or communications can be “prescriptive” (Greenberg, 1986, 2001), mechanical, or without affect, undermining “authentic” engagement. Although a most complex subject, I suspect most relational analysts view authenticity, anchored in affective experience, as central to analytic work (e.g., Levenson, 1983; Ehrenberg, 1992, Mitchell, 1993; Aron, 1996; Fosshage, 1997; Bacal, 1998; Hoffman, 1998; Renik, 1998). Analytic “guidelines” have replaced generic technical prescriptions (Orange, Atwood & Stolorow, 1997).

Attachment Needs and Forms of Relatedness: A Synthesis

Attachment needs—one of a variety of motivational needs or biases—are not unitary, but vary. Within the attachment motivational arena, self psychologists and Relational theorists, until recently, have been addressing different attachment needs and forms of relatedness. Self psychologists, Shane, Shane, and Gales (1997) and I (1997), along with my coauthors Lichtenberg and Lachmann (2002), have attempted to delineate these different forms of relatedness that require different kinds of analyst participation both with regard to listening-experiencing perspectives and responses.

On the basis of their research, attachment theorists (e.g., Main, 2000) have focused on the need for a sense of safety from a close attachment to a caregiver who is experienced as a secure base. Safety-attachment needs are fundamental and come to the foreground especially during times of experienced danger, abandonment, and loss. Emanating from infant research and dyadic systems theory, mutual regulation of affect is viewed as central (Stern, 1985; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992; Beebe and Lachmann, 1994). Winnicott’s “holding” (Slochower, 1996), Bion’s (1962) “containing,” and Kohut’s (1971) “omnipotent merger” all allude to the
mother's role in regulating affect in her infant and, correspondingly, within the analytic relationship (Teicholz, 1999).

In the development of the self, Kohut (1971, 1984) has described “self-object” needs for acknowledgment and affirmation (mirroring), for an admired, protective other (idealizing), and for a sense of essential likeness (twinship). These selfobject needs (what Stern, 1985, calls the “self-regulating other” and what Shane, et al., 1997, call “self-transforming other”), and corresponding forms of relatedness involve the use of another person for development and regulation of a sense of self. Selfobject needs and selfobject relatedness come to the foreground during times of self-expansion or of stress and vulnerability. On these occasions, analyst and analysand must find a way to cocreate needed selfobject (vitalizing) experience, partially through, but by no means limited to, communicated understanding. Self psychologists have extensively delineated this area of selfobject needs and relatedness.

Another kind of attachment experience involves the need to experience the other’s subjectivity in relationship to one’s own, a mutual recognition of one another, a dialogue between two persons—what Stern (1985) first introduced and called “intersubjective relatedness.” Emde (1988b) describes intersubjective relatedness as “I care to know and feel all about us, about you, about me, and about our ‘we-ness’.” Benjamin (1988, 1995) has most extensively elaborated on the concept of intersubjective relatedness and has chosen it to serve as the fulcrum of her theory of development and therapeutic action. Recognition of the subjectivity of another person is growth promoting. At those moments in the analytic arena when an analysand needs to experience the other’s subjectivity in relationship to one’s own, the analysand desires to encounter more fully the analyst’s subjectivity. The analyst must disclose in a broader, less circumscribed manner as compared to selfobject relatedness, his or her subjectivity. The analyst’s fuller disclosure of his or her subjectivity enables analysand and analyst to recognize one another, the sameness and difference. Benjamin (1990, 1995), Aron (1996), Renik (1998), and other Relational theorists, have well delineated intersubjective relatedness, which subsequently, some contemporary self psychologists (e.g., Shane, Shane & Gales, 1998; Fosshage, 1997; Lichtenberg, Lachmann & Fosshage, 2002) have integrated.

Another attachment experience involves the need to focus on or be concerned about the other in a relationship, what I call a “caretaking relatedness” (Fosshage, 1997). Examples are a parent’s focusing on and taking care of a child, a teacher of a student, an analyst of an analysand. This form of relatedness is highlighted in Erikson’s (1959) stage of generativity.

Identifying the attachment need and form of relatedness in the forefront on a moment-to-moment basis within the psychoanalytic hour substantially impacts the analyst’s participation, shaping what form of response will be facilitative. When safety, regulation of affect, and selfobject needs are in the foreground, the analyst’s subjectivity is important to the extent that it can be used for developmental and self-regulatory purposes. Other aspects of the analyst’s subjectivity can be experienced as intrusive and rupturing to the needed safety and selfobject connection. For example, if an analysand is in need of affirmation— for a particular achievement, the analyst needs to be sufficiently responsive so that analyst and analysand are able to cocreate an authentic affirming experience. In addition, considerable analytic illumination of the repetitive patterns of organization (for example, negative self and self-with-other percepts) most likely will be required. In contrast, when intersubjective relatedness or self-with-other needs are in the forefront, the analyst’s subjectivity needs to be expressed more fully to cocreate the developmentally needed experience. One analysand, for example, exclaimed, “I need to know your reactions to me as a person, how you experience me in a relationship.” In another form of relatedness, when an analysand genuinely expresses concern for the analyst, the analyst needs to be able to receive the caretaking so that the analysand can participate in this primary mode of relatedness.

When analyst and analysand are unable to cocreate the needed selfobject and relational experiences, analytic focus shifts to understanding the contributions of each to the interaction. If selfobject relatedness is in the foreground, then the empathic mode of listening-experiencing is at its best; for empathic inquiry conveys the analyst’s interest, acknowledgment, and implicit validation (not confirmation) of the patient’s reality that contributes to the cocreation of the needed mirroring selfobject ex-
experience. When intersubjective relatedness is in the foreground, an analyst must also have access to his or her experience of the analysand as an other in a relationship with the analysand—the other-centered perspective—in order to be able to interact in a facilitative manner. Analysands' priorities for different forms of relatedness shift, at times rapidly, at times gradually, requiring analysts to be flexibly available for therapeutic participation.

In my view, both self psychology and Relational psychoanalysis are at their best in addressing different domains of relational experience, each offering important understandings and guidelines for facilitative responses. When selfobject relatedness is in the foreground, indeed the analyst must be comfortable in expressing more circumscribed aspects of his or her subjectivity. Coming from a Winnicottian perspective, Slochower (1996), a Relationist, also writes of the necessity to contain "the analyst's disjunctive subjectivity." She notes that a period of "holding" is often necessary before an analysand is able to tolerate more of the analyst's disjunctive subjectivity.

The Relationists, on the other hand, are addressing a domain in which it is invigorating and facilitative of growth for an analysand to experience the analyst and the analyst's subjectivity more fully. The Relationists have been expanding the possibilities for self-expression and argue that it is problematic for an analyst to contain expressions of his or her subjectivity (Renik, 1993). Contemporary self psychologists have also been broadening the range of the analyst's self-expression (Bacal, 1998; Fosshage, 1995b, 1997; Shane, et al., 1998; Slavin & Kriegman, 1998; Lichtenberg, et al., 2002). In my view, embracing a fuller expression of the analyst's subjectivity has broadened the range of possible therapeutic responses. Analysands' shifting relational priorities and forms of relatedness, however, require us to share different aspects of our experience in order to facilitate growth.

Concluding Remarks

In this contextualized study of the influences, convergencies, and divergencies between classical and contemporary self psychology and Relational psychoanalysis, I have focused on the issues of listening-experiencing perspectives, the concept of self, and therapeutic action. In considering therapeutic action, I have focused on theories of psychoanalytic change, the analyst's participation, and different forms of relatedness.

A VIEW FROM SELF PSYCHOLOGY

Classical self psychology predated American Relational psychoanalysis; and, as I have noted, contributed to the change in paradigms from objectivism to constructivism and from drive and intrapsychic theory to relational field theory. The time lines of contemporary self psychology, intersubjectivity, and Relational psychoanalysis are the same. While each is contributing to the ongoing changes in psychoanalytic paradigms, significant differences exist. While those differences are invigorating and mutually challenging for further thought and articulation, the framework of different listening-experiencing perspectives and different forms of relatedness is an attempt to capture some of the differences and to establish a basis for a useful synthesis. Each of us as analysts needs all the listening-experiencing skills for understanding and as vast a repertoire of responses as possible to participate in an analytic process that is growth-promoting and vitalizing for our analysands as well as inevitably for ourselves.

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