

## CLINICAL THEORY

RELATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS: VOLUME 2. INNOVATION AND EXPANSION. Relational Psychoanalysis Book Series, Vol. 28. Edited by *Lewis Aron* and *Adrienne Harris*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2005, 512 pp., \$49.95.

This book is the second volume in a series presenting what its editors, Lewis Aron and Adrienne Harris, see as an emerging new tradition in psychoanalysis. The first volume, *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition*, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Lewis Aron, was published in 1999. In their introduction to the second volume, published in 2005, the editors describe the six-year period between the publication of the two collections as one of “great promise and a great loss within the relational and wider analytic community.” The death of Stephen Mitchell shortly after the completion of the first volume forms the sad backdrop for the publication of this one.

Wayne C. Booth (1979) offers the following oath to be taken by book reviewers: “I will publish nothing favorable or unfavorable about books or articles that I have not read through at least once. I will try to publish nothing about any book . . . until I have understood it, which is to think I can give an account that the author himself will recognize as just. Any attempt at overstanding will follow this initial act of attempted respect” (quoted in Patai and Corral 2004, p. 688 ). I needed to keep this caveat in mind, because I do not come to the subject of this book, relational psychoanalysis, as a first-time commentator. I have authored or coauthored reviews of important relational authors (Bachant and Richards 1993; Richards 1999) and engaged in a sharp and perhaps somewhat notorious interchange with Stephen Mitchell himself in the pages of the Division 39 Section 1 newsletter, the *Round Robin*. But I have tried here to live up to Booth’s principles; I read the anthology cover to cover three times, and have done my best to tackle each paper on its author’s terms, and to consider as well the editors’ intentions in putting together this particular collection. Through his coinage “overstanding,”

Booth warns us against trying to impose prematurely our own “superior” understanding upon texts with perspectives different from our own.

I also approached my task with the conviction, born of experience, that anthologies are challenging to put together. An anthology needs to be more than a collection of papers selected for their common subject matter or the affiliations of the contributors; it must be greater than the sum of its parts. In this case, I think that Aron and Harris have helped their cause greatly with their general introduction, with their separate introductions to each paper, and by appending an author’s afterword to many of the papers. Their editorial approach lends this work a richness by giving us the sense that we are encountering an emerging tradition—that relational psychoanalysis is a work in progress and an approach to psychoanalytic theory and practice that will be around for some time. Indeed, the “relational turn” has entered the vocabulary of most contemporary commentators on psychoanalytic theory and practice.

1414

The contributors to the two volumes suggest the breadth and diversity of the relational movement. Some differences between the authors in the two volumes are also noteworthy. While five contributors to the first volume were members of the American Psychoanalytic Association or the IPA, only three of the contributors to Volume 2 are. Further, while the first book had only three physician contributors, the second has only one—Theodore Jacobs—and he is misidentified as a Ph.D. How would it have fallen out, I wonder, if the American had followed Freud’s wishes instead of Brill’s and begun training lay analysts in the 1950s? It is ironic that Adrienne Harris, one of the editors of this second volume, was named a distinguished psychoanalyst at the January 2006 meeting of APsA, but still cannot qualify for admission to the association. Psychoanalysis is still struggling with broad questions about the formation of psychoanalytic schools and whether discipleship and affiliation play a greater (or lesser) role in this than theory and technique. This issue was recognized early on by Lewis Aron (1996), coeditor of both these volumes: “One way of viewing Mitchell’s achievement is to think of his having forged a multinationalistic coalition consolidating diverse nations, some of which have conflicting interests in regard to other matters, but uniting them against a common adversary [classical theory]” (p. 33).

However we understand the roots of the relational movement, this volume makes clear what a long way these ideas have come from the need to establish their place in the psychoanalytic landscape by focus-

ing on the distinction between the relational and the “classical” points of view. That was the approach taken by Mitchell and Greenberg in *Object Relations Theories in Psychoanalysis* (1983), the publication of which was one of the three events that launched the relational tradition. (The other two were the founding of the relational track at NYU and the launching of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*.)

Aron and Harris see relational psychoanalysis moving from a revolutionary stage in its development to an evolutionary one. They are aware of a potential danger in this process—that the movement might rigidify into a new orthodoxy: “Shibboleths, new orders, new orthodoxies, create difficulties internally and externally,” they point out, and they go on to remind us that “any group founded in opposition to orthodoxy has to find its ‘own’ vision beyond simple critique. Power inevitably snakes into the process” (p. xv). This statement reminds me of Sandor Rado’s warning, after he left the New York Institute to found the Columbia Center, that a group that breaks away from an organization it considers too authoritarian will often become more authoritarian than the organization it left.

Today relational psychoanalysis is a movement with its own associations, conferences, and publications. But the style of thinking that defines it as a movement is, to me, less clear; the nineteen contributions to this volume provide a welcome opportunity for analysts to make explicit for themselves the theoretical and technical imperatives that distinguish relational psychoanalysis from the rest of the psychoanalytic world—including what Rangell (1988) called “the mainstream [that] today is no longer the main” (p. 316). What does relational psychology define itself against? I think categorization here is not a simple matter. In a 2005 paper in *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Mills contends that relational analysts are looser, less uptight, less rigid, less abstinent, more willing to engage in self-disclosure, more humane, more genuine, and less distant intellectually. Some feel that this is the ideal that drives the relational enterprise and attracts its adherents. To their credit, however, the editors of this volume, and some of the contributors, recognize that this contention implies a stereotyped view of other analysts and an inaccurate description of actual “orthodox” practice. Certainly most analysts are aware by now that the analytic pioneers around Freud, and Freud himself, were not the rigid lot that succeeding generations described. Most analysts now share the recognition that they must work to gain their patients’ acceptance of

the rules of the psychoanalytic game, even if the patients are captive candidates. I think most analysts would agree as well that there was a time of unfortunate complacency in the American Psychoanalytic Association, thanks to its monopoly during the psychoanalytic years of plenty—plenty of patients and plenty of candidates. Today there is a middle ground between the insistence on an untenable abstinence and the belief that anything goes, a position occupied by both relational and traditional analysts in the real psychoanalytic world.

I think it noteworthy that the editors of this volume and their contributors do not attempt to debunk classical psychoanalytic theory by invoking a false drive/relational dichotomy, something the pioneer relationalists were wont to do. Relational psychoanalysis now has a place for drive, sexuality, the body, and aggression; in the context of our increasing awareness of the relational aspects of Freud's theory (Bachant, Lynch, and Richards 1995), another area of integration has emerged from the paradigm wars of the 1970s and 1980s. A question for me is, Are we seeing the emergence of a "unitary psychoanalytic theory," as Rangell (2004) would have it, or a unitary practice such as might follow from Wallerstein's "common ground" (1988)?

1416

The papers in this volume are arranged in three sections: "Therapeutic Action," "Relational Perspectives on Development," and "Social and Cultural Dimensions of Relationality." Almost all were published between 1994 and 2001, a period of considerable relational productivity.

The first section has nine contributors: Ehrenberg, Slochower, Cooper and Levitt, Slavin and Kriegman, Maroda, Jacobs, and Berman. The paper I find most persuasive is by Berman, a classically trained Israeli analyst who has been adopted by, and has adopted, the relational camp. He exemplifies the recent integrative approach that I so appreciate in his discussion of the therapeutic action of supervision. Rather than taking the position that psychoanalysis has morphed from a one- to a two-person psychology, he believes that "psychoanalysis is both a 'one-person psychology' (studying intrapsychic process) and a 'two-person psychology' (studying interactions)" (p. 147). From his vantage point, intersubjectivity becomes important as an attempt to integrate both aspects. He emphasizes that transference and countertransference cannot be studied separately, because "there is continuous mutual influence between analyst and analysand though this mutuality evolves in the context of a clear asymmetry that must be acknowledged" (p. 147).

Berman applies these concepts to a discussion of psychoanalytic supervision. He makes the case that the idea of standard technique is obsolete, and that the analytic impact of interventions can be evaluated only in retrospect. This makes for a supervisory attitude of humility that must be communicated to the supervisee and that ultimately benefits the analysand. Supervision is more than a place to convey dos and don'ts. Just as there is for Berman no standard technique for analysts, so there is no universal method of supervision. He believes that "communicating the supervisee's work with the supervisee's analyst would be a violation of confidentiality on both sides," but that "in principle, no personal topic . . . is out of place in supervision" (p. 163). Here again he exemplifies an integrative view of issues that all too often give rise to polarizing debates.

The other contributions to this section deal with therapeutic action proper. Each offers a distinctive organizing principle. For Ehrenberg it is the intimate edge; for Slochower it is holding; for Maruda it is affective communications; for Jacobs it is enactment. For Slavin and Kriegman evolutionary biology is foundational, and for Cooper and Levitt it is Fairbairn's view of object relations. This makes it hard to assess their contributions in a broader context. I am reminded of the postwar French intellectuals, who devised neologisms, even entire idiolects, associated only with themselves—Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, and others. This may tend to privilege style and slogan over substance. Psychoanalysis is not the only intellectual discipline to have fostered the belief that in order to make one's mark one has to make a mark on the vocabulary of discourse. But whether or not this belief is true, it does not let an author off the hook when it comes to presenting solid clinical data to justify technical or terminological innovation. In this regard, I believe, the collection might have been more generous. The seven papers in this clinical section include only nine case descriptions or vignettes, and three of these are offered by Jacobs.

Two recurrent themes in this section are the analyst's subjectivity and the problem of self-disclosure. Most analysts agree on the inevitability of the analyst's unconscious participation in the dyad; our disagreements are over the degree to which being aware of it, using it, and communicating it to the patient is essential to therapeutic action. The same considerations apply to the issue of self-disclosure. According to Aron (1996), the clinical exploration of the patient's

experience of the analyst's subjectivity is central to therapeutic action. Ehrenberg takes a more radical view, maintaining that without the analyst's disclosure, the analysis will never reach the "intimate edge" (p. 6). What is the mechanism of therapeutic action that makes self-disclosure therapeutic? Is it that the patient becomes more open out of identification with the openness of the analyst? That the patient will disclose more to the analyst if the analyst discloses more to the patient? Do patients become more accepting of their own pathology if analysts reveal more of their own disturbances? Do patients learn about their own unconscious from inferences that analytic self-disclosure enables them to make about the unconscious of the analyst?

1418

I view Part II of the book, "Relational Perspectives on Development," as the centerpiece of the volume. Editors Aron and Harris acknowledge that Mitchell's early formulations lacked a strongly developmental focus; in fact Mitchell (1988) dismissed some of the contributions of the Kohutians with a disparaging reference to their "developmental tilt" (p. 151). The three papers and one commentary in this middle section address this absence. The paper by Fonagy and Target, originally published in 1998, "Mentalization and the Changing Aims of Child Psychoanalysis," is clearly an important contribution to contemporary psychoanalytic theory. Fonagy and Target make a convincing case for the clinical relevance of developmental concepts to child psychoanalysis and the understanding and treatment of borderline patients. Their central concept, mentalization, is further elaborated by Coates in her commentary, which shows how failures in its development impacts on both individual and family pathology and its implications for treatment. Coates, Fonagy, and Target are part of a widespread effort to integrate attachment/developmental theory with traditional psychoanalytic theory. They have been included here although they do not describe themselves as relational analysts; here too the editors are to be commended for recognizing and building into their book the mutual influence of the relational and classical perspectives. Coates credits Fraiberg, Winnicott, Bion, and Stern as influences, adding another layer of richness to the developing relational tradition.

The relationship between developmental researchers and clinicians is another new focus within the relational tradition. Beebe and Lachmann's "Representation and Internalization in Infancy: Three Principles of Salience" looks at the literature on mother-infant interaction and offers three "salient" principles that have clinical impact:

“mutual and self regulation, attention to rupture or disruption and repair, and attention to affect attunement and heightened affective moments” (p. 206). This paper was originally published in 1994; Aron and Harris write “that in the succeeding decade each of these principles has emerged into clearer and clearer focus as a matter of striking clinical implication” (p. 206). In their afterword, Beebe and Lachmann refer to work they later published that illustrates “how attention to the interactive process through the three principles can be integrated with dynamic interpretations” (p. 247).

This research, as I see it, pertains not to the content of adult experience but to its form and process, specifically the patterning of interactions that are (in the relational view) central to the mechanism of therapeutic interaction. This content vs. process issue exists also in other psychoanalytic traditions.

I found Lyons-Ruth’s “The Two-Person Unconscious” the least accessible paper in the book, but careful reading and rereading was rewarding. She uses developmental, cognitive, psychological, and neuroscientific research to develop her ideas on “implicit relational knowing” (p. 315) and “enacted procedural meaning” (p. 316) within a dynamic systems rather than linear stages model. Lyons-Ruth tries to help us understand nonverbal processes in the analytic situation, an area that for decades has been of concern to analysts of all persuasions. Her work draws on the work of Stern and the Boston Change Process Group (2005), of which she has been a member. She too keeps before us unresolved questions about whether nonverbal communication is more important than verbal communication, and whether process is more important than content, and recognizes the importance of thinking about how all contribute, both in development and in a psychoanalysis.

The book’s third section, “Social and Cultural Dimensions of Relationality,” includes four contributions: Altman’s “Psychoanalysis and the Urban Poor”; Dimen’s “Perversion”; Leary’s “Race and Self-Disclosure”; and Corbett’s “Inversion and Marginality.” The Dimen paper is engrossing in its depth and breadth and in virtue of its unconventional writing style. Leary’s paper reprises the self-disclosure theme of the first section, but extends it to unavoidable self-disclosures such as race, or the sudden appearance on the analyst’s hand of a ring. She puts race, ethnicity, and gender in the foreground of the clinical situation as interpersonal realities that shape intrapsychic experience. Altman is to be commended for bringing psychotherapeutic intervention to an under-

served community, the urban poor. He stresses the contrast between two approaches: the effort to “feel one’s way” into the patient’s world, and the focus on ego deficits in this population (exemplified, he feels, by Pine), which calls for supportive measures, the analyst’s reliability, and nonspecific therapeutic factors. The emphasis on internalized object representations comes to relational psychoanalysts from the British object relations school and has loomed large in the relational approach, as it has for classical analysts like Jacobson and Kernberg, both of whom are cited by other contributors to this volume. Corbett pushes the traditional envelope by moving from queer theory and postmodernism to assert that “stage theories and linear conceptions of development do not adequately capture of the complexities of “subjective organizations” (p. 447). He raises questions similar to Lyons-Ruth’s about the place of models—particularly developmental models—in mapping the complexities of psychic life. He cites Wittgenstein’s assertion (via Rorty) that descriptions and explanations are tools for understanding, rather than actual representations or objective organizing principles of the world.

1420

Psychoanalysis has shifted in the last thirty years from a hierarchical, medically based model to a socially conscious, therapist-as-participant approach. In one sense we have come full circle; this change is in part a return to our roots. While the early group that surrounded Freud supported women’s rights, sex education, and other progressive ideas of the time, the psychoanalysis that developed in the U.S. came to be known as the property of a socially conservative, elitist group. Psychologists interested in psychoanalysis were excluded and could only obtain training unofficially. It was not until the antitrust suit of the 1980s made analytic training available to nonmedical applicants that this began to change. But to the chagrin of many a modern psychoanalyst, the image of the authoritarian therapist seems frozen in the minds of many within and without our field. Aron and Harris have provided a potent antidote.

We have been witnessing a shift in the prevailing zeitgeist. Preceding generations were dominated by metapsychology, by a belief in definitive causes and objective organizing principles; thus, the expectation to formulate theoretically derived broad goals for treatment was only natural. This generation has become more skeptical when it comes to truths of human nature and grand theories, and gives priority to more modest clinical theories. The success of relational psychoanalysis as a movement reflects in part its being in tune with the zeitgeist.

The papers published in Volume 2 reflect an important aspect of psychoanalytic evolution, and indicate some of the pathways that relational authors have been pursuing. This volume attests the growth and discrimination of the relational sensibility. There is for me a kernel of truth in almost all the contributions. In sum, I consider this collection an important contribution to our field. The papers in it look beyond their immediate concerns to address vital questions about the history of theoretical and technical change in psychoanalysis, about comparative psychoanalysis, and about the sociology of psychoanalytic knowledge. It meets for me the criterion of being greater than the sum of its parts, and I suspect that it will be useful and enlightening for psychoanalysts of all persuasions, at all levels of training and expertise.

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