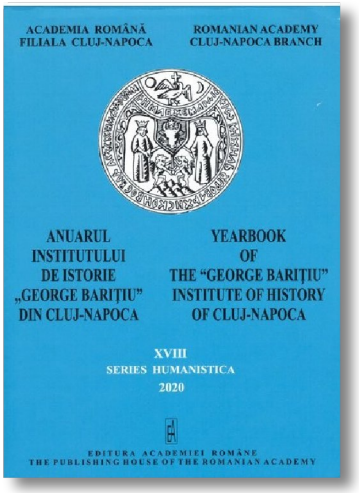

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RETHINKING HUMAN RELATEDNESS IN PSYCHOANALYSIS: A HEIDEGGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The paper aims to examine the concept of human relatedness in psychoanalytic research in light of the Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of human being and the Daseinsanalytic movement influenced by his thought. It first addresses the significance and the conceptual basis of the so-called interpersonal-relational shift in psychoanalysis. Then, different dimensions of human relatedness will be illustrated based on Heidegger's insights into the nature of man's existence. Marking Heidegger's distinction between our being-in-relationship-to the beings and the fundamental being-in-relationship-to the understanding of being is of great importance in this regard. Finally, it will be shown that, though the interpersonal-relational approach in psychoanalysis can be considered in harmony with Heidegger's emphasis on the relational character of human being in certain aspects, it can itself be under criticism from a Heideggerian perspective.*

Keywords: *Heidegger, Dasein, Daseinsanalysis, Being-in-Relationship-to, Interpersonal-Relational Psychoanalysis*

INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalysis, from its beginning, has undergone noticeable modifications respecting various aspects of the Freudian theory. Perhaps the most significant change in this regard has been taken place through the development of the relational-interpersonal orientation in this field. It may not be so accurate to unite the interpersonal and relational approaches to psychoanalysis, for clearly there are considerable differences between the two. Interpersonal psychoanalysis has its origin in the works of Harry Stack Sullivan, while by the relational psychoanalysis we usually mean the approach that has been developed mainly by Stephen Mitchell. However, for the purpose of this paper, we shall consider the common orientation that these approaches share, the shift away from the internal mental sphere to the relational concept of mind.

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But what do we mean when we speak of the relational mind in psychoanalytic discourse? This is an important question that is to be posed here, otherwise the concept of relational in this context will remain in darkness. We will consider this question from a Heideggerian point of view. And why Heidegger? Heidegger's deepening account of the relational self, intentionality and human directedness can cast light on the matter. Furthermore, Heidegger, as a philosopher, in his cooperation with the Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss, has been involved directly in the development of Daseinsanalysis, a phenomenologically based approach to the problems that psychologists and psychoanalysts deal with. Therefore, as one might expect, what he says in this regard can be of significance for the clarification of the issue under consideration.

So, in this paper, I want to reflect upon the relational shift in light of Heidegger's insights into human relatedness. I will show that, though the relational psychoanalysis, in its broadest sense, distant from the Freudian paradigm, is in harmony with the relational nature of human existence, the concept of relational in this framework is still theoretically problematic. This type of examination can help us provide a more phenomenologically appropriate basis for the psychoanalytic research.

RELATIONAL SHIFT AS A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE ISOLATED MIND

To begin with, I would like to regard the relational shift in psychoanalytic research as a conceptual shift away from the conception of the mind as an isolated, worldless, entity, embedded in the traditional paradigm. The noticeable role of human relatedness in shaping one's experience can be considered as the underlying ground of the relational-interpersonal psychoanalysis.

> Relational theory is based on the shift from the classical idea that it is the patient's mind that is being studied, where mind is thought to exist independently and autonomously within the boundaries of the individual, to the relational notion that mind is inherently dyadic, social, interactional, and interpersonal (Aron, 1996, Preface).

While in the Freudian psychoanalysis, human mind is essentially a self-contained mind, separated from the world, the shift gives special importance to human relationships. The basic tenet of this approach is that there is no separation between a person and her/his environment, so "nobody can be understood apart from his relationships with others" (Fonagy et al., 2003, p. 206). This point was first manifested in interpersonal theories, especially in connection with Sullivan's fundamental "principle of communal existence" that acknowledges the inseparability of the living organism from its "necessary environment" (Sullivan, 2011, p. 31). According to Sullivan, concerning the pivotal role of human

relationships in shaping our way of life, it can be said that "a personality can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being" (Sullivan, apud Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 104). Therefore, a person can be a person only in a specific context of relatedness to other human beings. The centralization of human interpersonal demands, the emphasis upon the essential role of the other in the life of the individual, and the critique of the intrapsychic orientation and of different forms of the postulated gap between the person and human environment in the traditional theories (Fonagy & Target, 2003, p. 206-209) can be regarded as the basic themes of the interpersonal approaches to psychoanalysis.

The same orientation can be seen in the framework of the relational psychoanalysis. In this context, Mitchell (1988, Introduction) speaks of the concepts such as the "interactional field", or the "matrix of relationships" with others in which we live. According to this point of view, the mind is essentially "composed of relational configurations" (Mitchell, 1988, Introduction). In this respect, Mitchell, on the shift from the Freudian theory to a relational one, writes:

> Freud views mind as fundamentally monadic; something inherent, wired in, prestructured, is pushing from within. Mind for Freud emerges in the form of endogenous pressures. Relational-model theories view mind as fundamentally dyadic and interactive. (Mitchell, 1988, Introduction).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that relational theories generally adhere also to an internal mental realm, which would be supposed to be in connection to the interpersonal sphere. However, the centrality of the relationships with other human beings, which is inherited from the interpersonal tradition, would still be considered as the essential feature of the mentioned shift in psychoanalysis (Aron, 1996, pp. 16-18; Mills, 2005).

Stolorow and Atwood's intersubjective-system theory, as a developed relational approach to psychoanalysis, can be regarded as the third significant perspective in which the above-mentioned shift becomes more manifest through calling the concept of isolated mind a "Cartesian myth" that is based on the dualistic division of the world in which we live into the internal realm of the mind and the external realm of the reality (Stolorow, 2011, p. 24), which "ascribes to man a mode of being in which the individual exists separately from the world of physical nature and also from engagement with others" (Stolorow & Atwood, 2010, p. 7). According to this approach, clinical phenomena do not belong to an internal individual region. Rather, they are always part of the "intersubjective field in which they crystallize" (Stolorow, 2011, p. 24). So, here again, human relatedness gains primacy over the traditional concept of mind.

The path of the conceptual change through the above-mentioned developments in the psychoanalytic research seems to be in the same direction with the rejection of the adherence to the Cartesian worldless ego and the posited

separation between a self-enclosed internal sphere and an external situation, in the phenomenological tradition[1]. Indeed, human relatedness, if understood properly, without the imposition of preconceived ideas, can itself be considered as a phenomenological achievement that overcomes such dichotomies. With reference to the nature of human intentionality, as Zahavi (2008) mentions, phenomenologists show us that the "commonsensical" division between the inside and the outside, between the mind and world, would be untenable. In this connection, phenomenology can be of special significance for psychoanalysis, for it can provide a sound basis for the relational-interpersonal shift in this framework. In what follows, I will limit the discussion to Heidegger's insights into the relational nature of the human existence and its relevance for relational theories.

HEIDEGGER'S VIEWS ON HUMAN RELATEDNESS

Heidegger's position toward the relationality of human being is to be seen as one of the central tenets of his philosophy. I shall consider various interconnected aspects of this position. First of all, as the existential analysis of Dasein shows, being-in-relation-to belongs essentially to the way of our being. According to Heidegger, in contrast to the worldless personal ego or the isolated self-sufficient subject that is commonly known as the Cartesian image of man, "the human being is always already addressed by beings other than himself" (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 137). It is always in relation to the other that it is. In other words, the individual subject who can relate to other beings occasionally, through the addition of an extant object to it, does not exist (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 60). Rather, we stand outside ourselves as relational entities that are essentially "directed toward" (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 60). As Heidegger (1987/2001, p. 231) points out, it is because of our "basic constitution" that we are constantly related to what reveals itself to us. So, this relatedness describes neither a response to a natural inescapable need, nor simply an attribute of human beings, for without it there would be no Dasein at all. To put it another way, according Heidegger's phenomenological point of view, the mind would be essentially dependent on "minding", on our "caring about other beings" (Polt, 1999, p. 57). Thus, the basic concept of the mental sphere that is essentially inside the individual, detached from the world, as presupposed in traditional psychoanalysis, would be problematic.

Secondly, it should be noted that, in making relation with beings, in the disclosure of what we encounter (Askay & Farquhar, 2011, p. 97), we are primarily directed to the being of the beings (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 158). We do not relate to other beings as an organism relates to the entities in its

[1] Though the emergence of the object-relations theory can also be considered as a part of the relational movement in psychoanalysis, it has not been referred to in this paper, for this approach is quite evidently based on the prominent emphasis upon the inner mind and internal relationships.

environment, for the human environment is not simply a collection of entities (Heidegger, 1919/2008, p. 58). We relate to beings directly in their meaningfulness in light of a certain understanding of being without which nothing can be encountered by Dasein as it is (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 275). Indeed, human being, by virtue of its necessary relationship to the understanding of being as a determining feature of its essence (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 153), always lives primordially a specific communal "given meaningful context" (Sheehan, 2015, p. 121). In our everyday life, we can relate, in one way or another, to entities only because they matter to us in these lived contexts of meaning in which they can present themselves. Human existence depends essentially on such contextual mattering. Accordingly, the role of the historic-cultural meaning contexts in shaping one's experience is not to be understood as the inescapable impact of environmental factors on individual minds. Without these contexts, nothing will be revealed as meaningful, and, thus, human response to the world, be it in a free or an unfree manner, be it normal or pathological, would be impossible.

Thirdly, an essential feature of our being-in-relation-to is that we are always directed to other Daseins in a specific way, in living a form of life, regarding Dasein's structure of being-with that "heads off the Cartesian chasm of self versus other" (Letteri, 2009, p. 42). This directedness is inseparable from human existence, "apart from whether and how others are factically there" with us (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 278). Dasein as being-in-the-world is being-with others in a non-individual world even in being-alone as a specific form of being-with (Heidegger, 1927/1996, pp. 111-113). In our being-there, we are essentially connected to others as "co-Daseins within a shared field of meaning" (Askay et al., 2011, p. 110) in a way that makes possible our sense of who we are. In such a social space we can be with others in various forms according to our self-understanding, but the escape from our relatedness to them as an essential aspect of our being-in-the-world would be impossible (Askay et al., 2011, p. 98). So, even in an anti-social way of self-understanding, as a "privative" form of our being-in-the-world, the significance of the others would not disappear (Blattner, 2006, p. 67). We can accept this basic dimension of human being freely, or deny the dependence of our identity on other Daseins. In any case, the manner in which we respond to it would be an essential character of our mental situation.

Fourthly, the inner-outer distinction in Heidegger's phenomenology of human existence collapses considering our way of being as being-in-the-world. Heidegger calls the distinction as a "constructive" one, which can give rise to further theoretical, abstract, constructions (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 64). Human mind, when seen phenomenologically, is not essentially encapsulated in a box-like internal sphere from which it must get out in order to be able to touch the external world (Heidegger, 1927/1996, p. 58).

> The idea of a subject which has intentional experiences merely inside its own sphere and is not yet outside it but encapsulated within itself is an absurdity which misconstrues the basic ontological structure of the being that we ourselves are (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 64).

Dasein doesn't have an outside, nor does it have an inside (Heidegger, 1919/1982, p. 66). We are always out there open to the presence of beings in their meaningfulness. Thus, the theoretical constructs that posit artificial gaps between the external meaningless entities and the subjective inner sphere, between "the sensible and the nonsensible as two realms that subsist on their own" (Heidegger, 1957/1991, p. 48) are to be discarded in a Dasein-based research. Through our being-there, beings always unveil themselves to us as meaningful entities in harmony with our prevailing mood. There is no need to presuppose theoretical entities such as intrapsychic feelings related to them stored in an inner mind in opposition to the outer objects, for we are always in the world through our already attuned relationships. So, the manner we relate to other beings has nothing to do with the mind as a container, nor with an external environment. The manner we related to other beings essentially must be seen in its belongness to our openness to the world. Furthermore, the representationalist accounts of human relatedness would be abandoned from this perspective. According to Heidegger, we do not relate to the beings through the psychic representations of the independent real objects of the external world. If we set aside fictitious constructs, trying not to be misled by preconceived theories, we can see that the things that we relate to are not mental contents, but the meaningful beings themselves. When I perceive something, whether others also perceive it as it appears to me or not, even in the case of an abnormal experience, what I am directed to is not something internal, a mere representation of the thing; it is the thing itself given to me in its meaningfulness. So, from this point of view, we never relate to intrapsychic objects. Rather, in our being, we are essentially out there directed to other entities themselves (Heidegger, 1919/1982, pp. 63-64).

On the basis of these points, Daseinsanalysis as a phenomenological approach to psychoanalysis influenced by Heidegger's thought, replaces the Freudian monadic mind, as a Cartesian worldless ego to which a lower layer, i.e., the unconscious, was attached (Richardson, 1993, p. 54), with a relational concept of mind as a "realm of world-openness" (Boss, 2000, p. 217). According to this perspective, as a network of relationships, we are always out of ourselves, in a communal context of meaning. One's mode of relating to other human beings and the response to the interpersonal dimension of our existence is not something separated from who one is. And there is nothing internal behind these relationships that brings about them in concrete situations. So, Heidegger rejects the idea of postulating a "porter" for human comportment in the world, which precedes the relational matrix (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 160). Thus, it can be said that, without our relationships to other people, there would be no I at all. Of course, we can be

open to others or close ourselves off to them - and this would shape the normal or pathological experiences related to this aspect of human being-in-the-world -, but the neutral position of an isolated ego free of any stance toward other Daseins would be impossible.

THE THEORETICAL INADEQUACY OF THE RELATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

Relational psychoanalysis, generally, is consistent with Heidegger's thought and Daseinsanalysis in its emphasis on the relational character of the human experience and the critique of the Freudian model of mind. However, from a Heideggerian perspective, it remains theoretically problematic in some aspects (Mascialino, 2008). In this regard, in Zollikon Seminars, Heidegger himself made just some brief remarks on Sullivan and his colleagues with a similar orientation (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 153). However, it's not difficult to see that, regarding Heidegger's points on Dasein's relational nature, Heidegger's criticism can be more inclusive. I would like to consider the elements in the relational psychoanalytic framework which would be negated by a Daseinsanalytic approach:

a. Heidegger declares that, when psychologists claim that human being is related to others, they "make an essential assertion about human being, the foundations of which are not even questioned" (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 153). So, though the interpersonal and relational theorists speak of human relatedness to others, their view can be dubious, for they usually don't consider the question concerning what makes human being human beforehand (Heidegger, 1987/2001, p. 153). On the contrary, Daseinsanalysis, based on the Heidegger's phenomenology of human existence, considers human relatedness to others not as a mere statement about human beings, but as an essential condition for our human experience and for the meaningful presence of anything to us. So, according to Heidegger, the interpersonal dimension of the human existence is itself what makes possible, factually, the relation to others. Here, the point is not merely that man is always in need of constant "interchange" with other human beings, as Sullivan (2011, p. 32) states, for, without the basic directedness to others, man would not be there at all. Any psychological theory that considers the interpersonal relationships as the crucial relationships between subjects, begins, indeed, with individual persons who are not essentially related to each other within a shared understanding of being. So, from a Daseinsanalytic perspective, it can be said that, without the clarification of the ontological basis of our relationships to others, any statement about human beings in the interpersonal-relational psychoanalysis would be theoretically questionable.

b. Although the relational psychoanalysis emphasizes the importance of human relationships, it, with the exception of the intersubjective-system theory, still acknowledges, generally, the intrapsychic realm, in addition to the interpersonal one, in various forms (Mascialino, 2008, p. 64). Therefore, the representationalist stance remains prevalent in the relational psychoanalysis, and the problematic terms, such as psychic projection and the internal objects, are commonly retained. While the relational approach tries to bridge the gap between the internal and external sphere, from a Daseinsanalytic perspective, it can be said that there is no gap between two distinct realms that is to be bridged. So, certain prevailing themes in the relational framework, such as the "balance" between the "intrapsychic and the interpersonal", or the "intrasubjective and the intersubjective" (Aron, 1996, Preface), the idea of the "internal representation" of the external relationships (Mitchell, 1988, p. 3), the conception of mind that "seeks contact" with other "other minds" out there (Mitchell, 1988, p. 3), the influence of the external environment on the "intrapsychic meaning systems" (Evans, 1996, p. 6), and the internal regulative mental contents that shape our experience of other people and ourselves (Evans, 1996, p. 7), would be problematic. According to the Daseinsanalytic point of view, the adherence to any artificial split between the individual and the social, the self and the context, the internal mind and the external reality, the intrapsychic meaning-giving procedures and the outer meaningless objects, must be abandoned in favour of a Dasein-based approach to human phenomena. So, speaking of the balance between the above-mentioned poles of man's experience would be nonsense. Furthermore, it would be only a theoretical presupposition without phenomenological justification to maintain that the individual is directed indeed to the mental representation of things in the external world, if we considered the internal relationship as something supplemental to the external one or take it as the main form of the connection with the world. A phenomenologically adequate foundation for the psychoanalytic research must be purified from all of the above-mentioned ideas inherited from the Cartesian tradition.

c. Considering Dasein's relationship to the understanding of being, it can be said that human relatedness is not to be limited to the set of particular interactions with significant people in one's life or "the reciprocal interplay between two- or more- subjective worlds" (Stolorow & Atwood, 2010, 4). There is always a broader communal horizon at work (Bracken, 2002; Mascialino, 2008). We can respond to other human beings in one way or another because others are always present for us in our realm of openness to the world in a certain way. But that realm of openness has its ground in a communal meaning-giving context that

> makes possible various forms of self-understanding and encountering the others. Our everyday connectedness to each other always occurs in the light of such a tacit shared context that has its own historic-cultural features, letting emerge the collective ways of life. For example, according to Dasein's communal moods, entities appear to us in different specific manners, depending on the cultural background, as a necessary condition for our being ableness to relate to them (Bracken, 2002, p. 133; Dreyfus, 1991, p. 172). "In one culture things show up as occasions for celebrating the sacred, while in another everything shows up as a threat to survival" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 172). The way we interpret ourselves depends on these contexts as well. While in a medieval culture, for example, one generally interprets himself as someone who must normally accept the practices of self-denial and human humiliation, and organize her/his activities on the basis of the idea of man's dependence on the God as the creator, in a Homeric culture, the prevalent way of interpretation of what it means to be a man would be based on the concept of the hero, according to which those who pursue the medieval denial of earthly life would be considered simply as the "pathetic losers who let people walk all over them" (Dreyfus, 1987, p. 315). From this point of view, it can be said that the repressed forms of life, the specific ways of relating to others that must be avoided, certain pathological "restrictions in a person's space of potentialities" and the "opportunities offered by life which one does not take" (Fuchs, 2012, p. 100) can be embedded in collective atmospheres that are more primary than the mere interplay of individual worlds. The conscious and the unconscious dimensions of our everyday activities and relationships to others would be based on a meaning background prior to particular interactions among persons, which must be considered in addressing normal and pathological forms of life.

It should be added to the three above-mentioned points that, just in the same way that the relational-interpersonal shift in psychoanalysis, through its distance from the monadic Freudian mind, has emphasized the significance of the interpersonal interactions between human beings, the Daseinsanalytic notion of mind as the realm of openness, as the mental realm which is not essentially located within the individual, can bring into light also the possibility of an alternative research framework regarding the place of the intercultural relationships, in understanding collective forms of experience, especially the pathological ones. Providing an appropriate foundation for conducting research on the psychopathology of cultural mental realms would be then what phenomenologists, through the study of the structures of our shared experience in "cultural worlds" (Staehler, 2017), can contribute to this research theme, especially when intercultural conflicts in today's world are under consideration.

CONCLUSION

I attempted to illustrate how, from a Heideggerian perspective, the relational shift in psychoanalysis would be considered. As mentioned, the emphasis on the matrix of interactions, and the critique of the isolated mind make this trend consistent with the Daseinsanalytic rejection of the basic separation of mind and world from the classical psychoanalysis. However, because of the fact that the relational psychoanalysis continues to use problematic ideas, such as the dichotomy of the inner and the outer, it can still be criticized on the basis of Heidegger's thought. A purified approach to the relational character of human experience would, first of all, make clear the ontological basis of our relatedness to each other. Secondly, it must abandon all the concepts based on the distinction between an intrapsychic realm and the interpersonal one, and the representationalism that is embedded in the classical theories as well as in? the relational approach. Furthermore, the relational context in which human beings are related to each other must not be limited to the interpersonal interactions, for any form of interaction presupposes a more fundamental human relatedness, that is the collective relatedness to being of beings. A phenomenologically justified basis for the relational psychoanalysis would be achieved only if we discard the above-mentioned questionable concepts and artificial constructs from the framework of the psychoanalytic research.

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