The psychological turn to relationality

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The Psychological Turn to Relationality

by

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The Psychological Turn to Relationality

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Over the past several decades, relationality or relationships in general have become a topic of interest within the field of psychology. New relational variations of theories are developed alongside prior positivist positions, common factors are being explored scientifically to identify the relational characteristics that make clinicians effective, relational implications of neurodevelopment abound, and various pragmatic relational terminologies are vying for adherents. Shults (2003) proposed that a broader philosophical turn to relationality is occurring in contemporary culture, and examined it primarily within philosophy and theology. Historically, the relationship between philosophy and psychology has been largely severed since psychology sought to define itself separately as a scientific discipline in the late nineteenth century. Since that time, psychology has embraced a scientific epistemology that largely ignores ontological considerations.

The central thesis of this paper is that the turn to relationality occurring in the field of psychology involves 2 distinct veins that rely on very different philosophical and anthropological
assumptions. Each of these ultimately has implications for the integration of psychology and Christianity. One vein attributes relationships secondary status to the identity and substance of the individual; this vein relies on an individual analogy of personhood. The other vein seeks to balance relations and substances as simultaneous constituting factors in the identity of individuals; this second vein relies on a social analogy of personhood.

The philosophical inheritance of the relational turn was examined in the context of the outgrowth of Continental forms of philosophy in order to clearly distinguish both relational veins. The resulting philosophical and anthropological assumptions of these veins were further expanded and explored within various disciplines including theology, psychology, and the integration of these two disciplines.

Ultimately, the task of integration is enriched as relational ontological considerations encourage increased developmental sensitivity to identity formation, emphasis on models of process, consideration of the role of the Holy Spirit, expansion of sociocultural models, and a defining value for human agency.
## Table of Contents

Approval Page .......................................................................................................................... ii

Abstract........................................................................................................................................ iii

Chapter 1: Introduction........................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: Philosophical Inheritance....................................................................................... 3

  Enlightenment......................................................................................................................... 4

  Continental vs. Analytic......................................................................................................... 6

  Continental Philosophy......................................................................................................... 8

  Interpretive/Ontological Turn............................................................................................... 10

  History of Hermeneutics...................................................................................................... 12

Chapter 3: Philosophical Turn to Relationality...................................................................... 16

  Anthropological Turn......................................................................................................... 16

  Theological Trinitarian Analogies....................................................................................... 18

Chapter 4: Psychological Turn to Relationality..................................................................... 22

  Possible Causes for Relational Turn.................................................................................. 24

  Relational Turn in Psychoanalysis................................................................................... 30

  Relational Ontology and Middle Ground Theories......................................................... 33

    Relational ontology ........................................................................................................ 33

    Middle ground theories................................................................................................. 35

Chapter 5: Integration............................................................................................................ 38

  Imago Dei.......................................................................................................................... 38

  Ontological Considerations in Integration...................................................................... 40
The Psychological Turn to Relationality

Chapter 6: Conclusion ........................................................................................................47
References ..........................................................................................................................49
Appendix A  Curriculum Vita ..............................................................................................63
Chapter 1

Introduction

Shults (2003), a theologian and philosopher, proposed that a re-turn to relationality is currently occurring in philosophy and theology, which has significant implications for the social sciences as well. The focus on relationality is considered to be a reclaiming and emphasizing of prior existing values that have been present in Christian history at least since the patristic era.

Interest in relationality within the field of psychology has exponentially grown within the past few decades. It is marked by a general fascination with the effects of relationships and social influences on individuals that permeates many theoretical perspectives (Held, 2007; Kirschner & Martin, 2010). It is also apparent in the focus on scientific research concerning the common factors that promote therapist effectiveness, especially in regards to the development of the therapeutic relationship (Duncan, Miller, Wampold, & Hubble, 2009; Norcross, 2002). The central thesis of this paper is that a turn to relationality is occurring in the field of psychology in two distinct veins that rely on very different anthropological assumptions, which ultimately have significant implications for the integration of psychology and Christianity.

Following Shults’ (2003) lead, the examination of relationality in psychology will heavily rely upon philosophical considerations, which historically have not been widely accepted within the discipline of psychology. Section one will focus on the philosophical inheritance of contemporary relational values by tracing the development of Continental and Analytic traditions
and their related anthropological and metaphysical assumptions. Continental philosophy will then be defined and emphasized as many of the assumptions inherent to the relational turn have developed within this broad philosophical canopy.

Chapter 2 will expand these anthropological and metaphysical assumptions into contemporary theology and the emphasis since World War II on relational values in Trinitarian theology. Two distinct theological anthropologies can be seen to have coexisted since this time, which have direct connections with the philosophical inheritance discussed in the first section of this paper (Grenz, 2001; Shults, 2003). One is an individual analogy of personhood, while the other is a social analogy of personhood.

Chapter 3 will trace the two relational veins, an individual analogy and a social analogy, into the field of psychology in order to clearly illuminate possible contributing factors to the relational turn and its impact on the field of psychology.

The fourth and final chapters will continue to trace the social analogy of personhood and ontological relational values into current formulations of imago Dei. This allows for the examination of the potential impact of the relational turn on the integration of psychology and Christianity.
Chapter 2

Philosophical Inheritance

In the 1880s, American experimental psychologists attempted to establish the new experimental science of psychology in philosophy departments (Benjamin, 2007). Mental philosophy or an empirical science of the mind quickly began to develop alongside the new experimental psychology in this unique intellectual environment. The new psychologists grew to reject the developing mental philosophy because it relied too heavily on metaphysical speculation. As a result, psychology developed into a distinct field by separating itself from many, if not all, of its philosophical roots. Simultaneously, psychology was also attempting to define and market itself as a laboratory science distinct from prior pseudo-psychologies such as mesmerism, mental healing, physiognomy, and spiritualism (Benjamin & Baker, 2004). At the turn of the nineteenth century, science gradually became the most definitive and credible source of knowledge. Since then the relationship between philosophy and psychology has remained largely severed (Schrag, 1990).

Within psychology three very different approaches to human behavior have been posited to have grown out of the late nineteenth century as psychology was divorcing itself from philosophy, while simultaneously pursuing a scientific identity (Kockelms, 1990). These three approaches to human behavior were experimental psychology, verstehende psychology, and introspective psychology. Descendants of these three approaches can be found in current
categories of empirical psychology, hermeneutic psychology, and phenomenological psychology (Bouchard, 1991). A shift from hermeneutic philosophies of science to an empirical philosophy of science occurred in the 1920’s as behaviorism became the focus of psychological inquiry (Neimeyer & Raskin, 2001). Over the past century, attention has largely been placed on experimental psychology, while hermeneutic and phenomenological psychologies have been confined to specific traditions that have been heavily influenced by the Continental tradition in philosophy.

The Continental tradition in philosophy has contributed a significant philosophical inheritance to contemporary relational values that are becoming popular within psychology and across other diverse disciplines. The birth of Continental philosophy, its current relationship with the dominant form of Analytic philosophy, and a broader movement from epistemological to ontological considerations within both traditions of contemporary philosophy will prove crucial to the examination of the current re-emergence and interest in relationality within the field of psychology, and the ramifications it has for the integration of psychology and Christianity.

**Enlightenment**

The Enlightenment was firmly established by the eighteenth century, and is often described as comprising three major components (Brinton, 1967). The first and most important involved a wholehearted commitment to reason. Reason became a means of accessing knowledge, the defining feature of intelligence, and the liberator from prior unqualified commitments (e.g., superstitious beliefs and unexamined traditions). The second component—nature and the natural world—became valued as the most primary object of study and the most
credible source of knowledge. Finally, the third was expressed in the belief in progress in all human endeavors.

Many contend that although the Enlightenment produced a value for reason and rationalism the subsequent impact on modernity is more accurately conceived as two competing traditions. The dominant tradition and most widely acknowledged definition of the Enlightenment was the high value its proponents placed on optimistic scientific or empirical rationalism. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, counter-Enlightenment proponents, who formed the second rational enlightenment tradition, took up a humanistic focus in response to the turn to scientific or empirical rationalism. This tradition valued metaphysical rationalism (e.g., romanticism).

Dupre (2004) posited that the Enlightenment also marked a significant anthropological shift in the conception of the modern self as an individual. Prior to the Enlightenment, persons found their identity in the larger universe and created order, which placed emphasis on their station in life or their hierarchical status in society. The valuing of the individual in the Enlightenment allowed persons to conceive of themselves and others in new ways (Mansfield, 2000). With the dominant value in rationalism, traditional credence in the soul gave way to the influence of the human will and intellect, which simultaneously paralleled a general cultural movement away from religious allegiances to the explanatory power of scientific, objective personal knowledge, and the search for related causal explanations. In fact, fields such as anthropology, modern history, modern philosophy, natural sciences, and human sciences were all born out of this shift to the objective vantage point of the individual (Dupre, 2004).
Both competing strands of the Enlightenment, empirical and metaphysical rationalism, are often viewed as relying on a Cartesian conception of the individual self, although they manifested this assumption in very different ways. The dominant strand of scientific rationalism relies upon a rational, individual and autonomous self that is able to become free through the use of reason and empirical investigation. In other words, the objectification or abstraction of the self from both external forces and internal forces allows self-mastery to occur (Cushman, 1995).

The second competing strand, metaphysical rationalism, still relies on an individual and autonomous self, but posits that the self emerges from self-expression rather than self-mastery, thus yielding a more particular rather than universal self. This form of self is often called the autobiographical self, because of its inward focus on unique individuality (Cushman, 1995).

**Continental vs. Analytic**

In the eighteenth century, an interest in language emerged from the focus on individual reasoning and resulted in forms of writing such as the novel and autobiographies (Dupre, 2004). By the early twentieth century, a “linguistic turn” propelled by the precision of scientific methods was occurring in philosophy that began to challenge the epistemological emphasis that had dominated the discipline for two centuries (Rosen, 2001). Bohman, Hiley, and Shusterman (1991) stated, “The linguistic turn has been characterized by preoccupations with the structure of language, word-world relationships, and the analysis of meaning” (p. 1). Early in the twentieth century, the growing gap between knowledge and wisdom became clearly visible in a rift within professional philosophy as two traditions took shape (Critchley, 2001). Continental philosophy is influenced by metaphysical rationalism and Analytic philosophy by the dominant empirical rationalism. Both Continental and Analytic traditions recognized the importance of language and
its broad influence on understanding and meaning, and both took linguistic turns in their own ways. These differing linguistic commitments are partially what brought the two opposing traditions into clear view early in the twentieth century.

There has been little consensus on how to clearly define and distinguish these two opposing traditions. The most typical distinction is one of geography, which aligns British and Anglo-American sects (i.e., Analytic) against other largely French and German inspired ones (i.e., Continental) on the mainland of Europe. In many regards, Analytic varieties of philosophy have largely taken hold in both British and American contexts, resulting in the current and dominant form of philosophical discourse in both countries.

Besides geography, the second most common distinction is methodological commitments: Empirical-scientific and hermeneutic-romantic (Critchley, 2001). Analytic philosophy uses a science-like methodology that values clear and precisely structured logic, whereas Continental traditions have largely taken on a much more literary methodology (Biletzki, 2001). This focus on literary methodology has spawned a reliance on hermeneutics. Hermeneutics refers to the study of interpretation, which originally developed as a field of study of religious and sacred texts over 300 years ago.

Many believe that both geographical and methodological distinctions between Analytic and Continental traditions are reductionistic, and are not an accurate representation of the diversification of the two sides over the past century (e.g., Critchley & Schroeder, 1998; Glock, 2008; Levy, 2003). It should also be noted that many resist aligning themselves with either tradition, and in fact are offering valuable work from outside these two positions (Levy, 2003). Critchley and Schroeder (1998) posited, “Both Continental and Analytic philosophy are, to a
great extent, sectarian self-descriptions of philosophy that are the lamentable consequence of the professionalization of the discipline” (p. 14).

Analytic philosophy has successfully modeled itself on the physical sciences (Levy, 2003), which has allowed the proliferation of problem solving within clear and specific subdisciplines (e.g., theory of mind, cognitive science, philosophy of science). Levy (2003) contended that Continental philosophy does not adhere to a specific scientific methodology, which accounts for several unique characteristics including a general lack of subdiscipline specialization, less interest in specific problem solving focuses, and the proliferation of countless schools of thought.

**Continental Philosophy**

Various theoretical branches within psychology were heavily influenced by Continental thought and values including phenomenology, existentialism, humanism, client centered theory, psychoanalysis, and various forms of constructivism. Continental philosophy is often associated with, if not mistaken for, the phenomenological school, which is a major school and influence within the Continental tradition (Sokolowski, 2000). Viewing the field of philosophy more broadly is helpful in understanding Continental parameters. There are a number of subdivisions within philosophy such as logic, epistemology, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, ethics, etc., and Continental philosophy does not neatly fit into any of these frameworks. In many ways, Continental philosophy cuts across all of them (Critchley & Schroeder, 1998). Various intellectual traditions can be seen to have influenced the broad canopy of Continental philosophies, most stemming from metaphysical rationalist or counter-Enlightenment traditions, although there tend to be general themes that unite them.
One such theme is a strong consciousness of history (Critchley & Schroeder, 1998). Much of the focus of the Continental tradition is on practice due to its value for history and the need for accurate interpretation of the methodologies of philosophy in light of contextual implications such as history, culture, society, etc. (Glock, 1998).

Another theme in Continental philosophies, in part due to the practical focus of historical interpretive considerations, is the actual use of philosophy as a vehicle for social commentary and critique (Critchley & Schroeder, 1998). This functional emphasis has an emancipatory intent that critiques present conditions for the purpose of designating a crisis that must be resolved. Critchley & Schroeder (1998) stated:

The fact that philosophy in the Continental tradition can be said to respond to a sense of crisis in modernity and indeed tries to produce crisis insofar as it endeavors to awaken a critical consciousness of the present, perhaps also goes some way to explaining its most salient and dramatic difference from analytic philosophy, namely its anti-scientism (an attitude that is, of course, far from being anti-scientific). (p. 12)

Critchley (2001) proposed a simple model for conceptualizing philosophy in the Continental tradition. It begins with critique, is followed by praxis, and ends with emancipation. By no means is there a general consensus within Continental philosophy regarding what should be the focus of critical reflection, and in fact, it varies dramatically between different theorists and schools. Critique of current conditions is what actually grounds the practice of philosophy in a real and meaningful way for Continental philosophers. Critchley stated, “The real crisis would be a situation where crisis was not recognized. In such a world, philosophy would have no
purpose, other than as a historical curiosity, an intellectual distraction, or a technical means of sharpening one’s common sense” (p. 73).

Continental theorists and their values for historiography, emancipation, and anti-scientism can be recognized by their work in philosophical hermeneutics, phenomenology, semiotics, critical theory, feminism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, deconstructionism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism (Daniel, 2005). It becomes obvious from these categories that Continental theorists are drawn to political and social philosophy (Cooper, 1994; Levy, 2003). Continental philosophy has tended to constitute a broader range of metaphysical outlooks than Analytic philosophy (Atkins, 2005; Williams, 1990).

The current focus of both Analytic and Continental traditions is synonymous with contemporary philosophy in general, which is primarily concerned with language, discourse, hermeneutics, and texts rather than cosmological, teleological, or even metaphysical questions (Rosen, 2001). Miller (1992) described contemporary philosophy by stating, “Philosophy is primarily seen as either an extension of science, as in philosophy of science, or to be done in a scientific or analytical manner” (p. 17).

**Interpretive/Ontological Turn**

The linguistic turn of the early twentieth century contributed an air of skepticism to the prior unquestioned foundations of knowledge and the knowing subject. In the second half of the twentieth century, this skepticism has further been called into question during a period of rapid globalization, increased industrial and technological growth, mass human migrations from rural to urban settings, and an explosion of instant international communication. These factors have contributed to rapid movement beyond the initial influence of the linguistic turn in philosophy to
the subsequent realization that a constricted focus on language, especially from a strictly Anglo-American perspective, cannot adequately account for the rapid expansion and diversification of positions and meanings that globalization has brought to the forefront of the dialogue.

This unsettling of the foundations of knowledge is clearly visible in a new emphasis on interpretation, which has been called the interpretive turn (Bohman et al., 1991; Frie, 2010). In many regards, theory within philosophy has come to be considered synonymous with interpretation or invention (Rosen, 2001). Rosen stated:

> Analysts and continentals alike are attracted to notions of invention rather than discovery, interpretation rather than contemplation or intuition, the celebration of difference rather than identity or sameness, and freedom rather than submission to the reification and suppression of necessity. (p. 347)

The influence of other interpretive disciplines that implement various theories and methodologies of interpretation, such as cultural anthropology, jurisprudence, historiography, literary criticism, religion, and feminist theory, have also had an impact on the turn beyond linguistics to interpretation (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999). Many fields since the 1970s have experienced this interpretive phenomenon, as subspecialties have developed alongside more traditional positivist variations. Cultural or social anthropology is one example of this, as it developed outside of the typical three categories of anthropology: Archeological, linguistic, and biological/physical. Held (2007) stated:

> In making the interpretive turn, these scholars take the (contextualized) interpretive or meaning-making powers and acts of human agents to be fundamental both to human
(social and psychological) existence (an ontological matter) and to inquiry about that existence (an epistemological matter). (p. 6)

The interpretive turn has involved a movement away from solely epistemological considerations to emphasizing inherent, although often unexamined, ontological assumptions. There are certainly those who in making or claiming this turn support more extreme positions of epistemological relativism, although in actuality, a majority of them do not. Many have used the term ontological turn synonymously with the interpretive turn (Held, 2007). This definition speaks to the overall neglect of broader ontological considerations in the wake of Western philosophy’s commitment to scientific methodology, and ultimately, epistemological values. Many supporters of the ontological/interpretive turn value a mutual reciprocity between epistemology and ontology and wish to expand the current emphasis on substance metaphysics to broadly encompass greater contextual influences and processes (Held, 1995; 2007).

Developments in the field of hermeneutics within Continental philosophy is one of the areas that most clearly evidences this transition from epistemological to ontological considerations, which is a driving force in the interpretive turn.

History of Hermeneutics

The term hermeneutics first came into usage during the Protestant Reformation following the Council of Trent (1545–1563) (Richardson et al., 1999). By the seventeenth century it was considered an adjunct discipline to theology with its own interpretive methodology for determining the meaning of scripture in light of church authority and tradition (Orange, 2011). Two major transitions are typically considered of central importance within its 300-year history (Richardson et al., 1999; Ricoeur, 1981).
The first transition occurred in the mid-nineteenth century and involved moving from local forms of theological and sacred text interpretation, which can be traced back to Stoics and church fathers, to the idea of a general methodological hermeneutics able to produce a universal form of interpretation applicable to every form of human discourse (Richardson et al., 1999). Fredrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), a theologian, is considered to be one of the first to propose such a hermeneutic methodology (Shults, 2003). His methodology attempted to reconstruct the original intent of the author of a given literary work, which involved both grammatical and psychological considerations. A central assumption of Schleiermacher’s methodology was the Romantic belief in an inner mental domain that was distinct from outer expression (Shults, 2003).

A later hermeneutical theorist, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), helped to transition the field into its contemporary emphasis by focusing on the outer expression that Schleiermacher considered of secondary importance (Richardson et al., 1999). Dilthey’s methodology sought to comprehend not just speech acts, but more universal human phenomena such as actions, works of art, historical events, and social movements. He espoused a methodological dualism that favored distinct scientific methods; the natural order was considered more conducive to causal explanations, while the study of humans was more descriptive because of its inability to produce truths independent from contextual influences (Shults, 2003). His consideration of the human sciences contributed to what is now known as the hermeneutic circle, which highlighted the process of understanding a text through the reciprocity of whole to individual parts and individual parts to the whole. Although Dilthey provided the foundation for later ontological
considerations in the field of hermeneutics, he still largely favored an epistemological emphasis like Schleiermacher that sought to outline specific methodologies of interpretation.

The second transition within the history of hermeneutics began to occur at the beginning of the twentieth century and entailed moving from a primarily epistemological or methodological focus to current ontological trends (Richardson et al., 1999). Martin Heidegger is credited with achieving this movement from epistemological to ontological hermeneutics, which sought to consider the mode of being for humans or the self-interpretation of human existence (Sokolowski, 2000). Richardson et al. (1999) stated:

The result was a shift from seeing hermeneutics as primarily epistemological or methodological, where the aim is to develop an art or technique of interpretation, to today’s ontological hermeneutics, which aims to clarify the being of the entities that interpret and understand, namely, ourselves. (p. 200)

Three different philosophical traditions have turned to a variety of contemporary versions of hermeneutics during the 1970s and early 1980s: Anti-positivist analytic philosophers influenced by Wittgenstein’s later writings, the Frankfurt school of German philosophy influenced by Habermas, and ontological hermeneutics or philosophical hermeneutics influenced by Gadamer (Miller, 1992). In the past century, developments within hermeneutics have influenced many fields including archaeology, literature, critical theory, architecture, international relations, law, psychology, theology, and sociology (Orange, 2009; 2011).

Self-Interpretation of human existence is the central preoccupation of the interpretive/ontological turn, which entailed a significant anthropological shift over prior modern conceptions. It should be noted that not all have taken this turn in philosophy, and many would
even contend that this turn is either imperceptible or entirely unwelcome. Understanding these philosophical developments helps to illuminate the shift in anthropological focus that undergirds much of the current re-emergence and interest in relationality within the field of psychology. This anthropological shift is also quite visible within theology, which will be the focus of the next section.
Shults’ (2003) description of a recent emphasis on relational concepts in philosophy and theology is not altogether new for theology or for philosophy, and should actually be considered a re-turn to these values. He stated, “The novelty is a new emphasis on the insertion of the category of relation into the heart of metaphysical discourse” (p.12). Substance has classically been privileged over relation as an explanatory category in metaphysics. Many are also contending that a general resurgence and interest in metaphysics is also occurring in contemporary philosophy (Rescher, 1997; Stroll, 2009). This is in part due to an emphasis on systematic and integrative philosophy at a collective level, and a changing attitude towards the relationship between science and metaphysics as being more compatible. Reconceptualizations of anthropological values are closely related to this shift.

**Anthropological Turn**

Analytic and Continental traditions within the modern age, motivated by their distinct scientific epistemological and ontological emphases, have served to propagate very different conceptions of personhood. Analytic philosophy with its rational emphasis and scientific commitments has largely relied upon a conception of the self-mastering, individual, rational self as the basis of personal identity as well as the discipline’s primary unit of study (Cushman, 1995).
Continental philosophy with its broad range of metaphysical schools, humanistic emphasis, lack of methodological commitments, and value for sociocultural and historical influences has provided a unique environment for the proliferation of the individual, self-expressive self as well as other diverse variations (Frie, 2003). Mansfield (2000) contended that theories of the self within the Continental tradition fall into two broad camps. Those that posit subjectivity as a definable and measurable entity and those that believe subjectivity imprisons persons to the misguided ideology that selfhood is the most precious possession and ultimate freedom (i.e., anti-subjectivity). Frie (2003) stated:

From a reductionistic postmodern perspective there are only two versions of the self: the Cartesian conception of the self as an essential, non-relational entity, and the postmodern notion of the self as a social construct, embedded in relational, linguistic, and cultural contexts. In the process, an entire tradition of thinking about the self and subjectivity in terms of implicit, embodied experience, ranging from early German Romantic philosophy through phenomenology and modern neuroscience, is essentially ignored. (p. 16)

In this light, reductionist Continental conceptions of self or personhood can be seen to either valorize subjectivity (i.e., the definable presence of something) or anti-subjectivity (i.e., the absence of anything). The latter position is closest to extreme positions of postmodernism that herald relativism and parade the death of the self. Other conceptions that hold a social and/or relational conception of self do not neatly fit into any of these distinctions and are entirely overlooked or misunderstood (Frie, 2003; Shults, 2003). Continental philosophy, within certain schools, has also given birth to a social analogy of personhood, which is apparent in the
development of philosophical anthropology throughout the twentieth century and its impact on theology (Grenz, 2007; Shults, 2003).

**Theological Trinitarian Analogies**

The philosophical turn to relationality is most visible within theology in its emphasis on the Trinitarian nature of God that emerged near the end of the First World War (Shults, 2003). This emphasis has sparked a reconsideration of human nature, the idea of personhood, and subsequent re-conceptualizations of theological anthropology.

Karl Barth is widely acknowledged as renewing the focus of theology on the Trinity (Grenz, 2001; Shults, 2003). Grenz (2001) stated, “Perhaps more consequential than the mere renewal of interest in the Trinitarian conception of God has been the revival of one particular model of the Trinity, the social analogy that has its roots in the patristic era” (p. 4). The interest in a social conception of the trinity has been formed in part by a broader critique of Western Orthodoxy (Shults, 2003). It has been charged that an overemphasis on the oneness of the Godhead has occurred to the detriment of its threeness, which consists of the relational nature of the divine (Blocher, 2009). Many contend that varieties of philosophical personalism (i.e., Continental schools) have actually been more influential in the development of contemporary Trinitarian theology than Barth’s theological formulations (Grenz, 2001; Shults, 2003). Martin Buber, Michael Polanyi, and John Macmurray have been some of the most influential of these theorists who have sought to replace the reigning individualistic notion of what it means to be a person with a more social definition.

Barth’s neo-orthodox Trinitarian position was in response to prior stances such as Friedrich Schleiermacher’s that attempted to reconcile the criticisms of the Enlightenment with
traditional Protestant orthodoxy (Shults, 2003). Whereas Schleiermacher addressed the issue of the Trinity in the culmination of his *The Christian Faith*, Barth began his *Church Dogmatics* with the Trinity and in fact made it the central focus of his work. Though Schleiermacher focused explicitly on the topic of the Trinity later in his works, he still expounded one of the earliest views of relationality. Schleiermacher was considered the Father of Modern Protestant Theology, and his work has been considered to form the foundation of the modern field of hermeneutics (Richardson et al., 1999). This early form of hermeneutics is often referred to as romantic hermeneutics, because of its counter-Enlightenment characteristics.

Barth’s theology was a step to extinguish these romantic influences and the general theological liberalism of the day and to align theology with what he considered was proper revelation that avoided the contamination of cultural and human ideology (Shults, 2003). Though he emphasized the mutual indwelling of the Godhead, as he was heavily influenced by Buber, his theology largely rests on a positivistic epistemological foundation of divine revelation from above, which tends to constrict his focus on relationality. His model certainly places greater emphasis on relationality than prior individual models, although the focus becomes interpersonal transactions or modes of relating. The necessity of relationships for appropriate human development is valued for the purpose of developing individuals of autonomous functioning, rather than deemed a continual and necessary condition for the constitution of human identity.

Models of individual personhood tend to rely heavily on cognitive functioning, intelligence, and human will for the purpose of defining and perpetuating static, individual selves. It should also be noted that models of both subjectivity and anti-subjectivity previously discussed in postmodern reductionistic models also implement an individual analogy of personhood; one
values the definable presence of some form of independent subjectivity and the other, seemingly analogous position, rejects any form of defining subjectivity, which is deemed to imprison persons to cultural dictates (Richardson et al., 1999). Both rely upon a model of the Cartesian individual self regardless of the presence or absence of such a definable self.

The second definition of relationality employs a social analogy of the Trinity that can be traced back to various thinkers in the patristic era (Grenz, 2001). This social analogy is also illustrated in the hermeneutic tradition, and is most evident in various philosophical personalisms (e.g., Martin Buber, Michael Polanyi, and John Macmurray). Inherent in this movement to a social analogy of the Trinity and subsequent conceptualizations of theological anthropology is an emphasis on the centrality of relationality. Not simply interpersonal relationships, but the actual constituting of persons by their relating to others. Models of social personhood rely heavily on contextual and systematic frameworks as a defining feature of development and personal identity, which calls for greater complexity of self-understanding, social participation, and examination of epistemological/ontological commitments.

It would be a gross misrepresentation of the field of philosophy or of theology to say that all have made the philosophical turn to relationality, especially as a conscious metaphysical commitment. In fact, it is far more common for the individual analogy of personhood to be the focus of relational intent and public discourse, especially since this position is in line with dominant cultural definitions of an individual and autonomous self. Many are arguing that individuals from younger generations as well as international travelers, missionaries, multicultural individuals, etc. are more commonly developing these distinct relational and identity values than did prior generations (Fowler, 1996; Kegan, 1982; 1994). Attention will now
be turned to psychology to examine some of the influences on the growing interest in relationality, and particular examples of the social analogy of personhood that are evident within the field of psychology.
Chapter 4

Psychological Turn to Relationality

Central to Shults’ (2003) conception of the relational turn in philosophy and theology is a developmental emphasis. Developmentally, many individuals are being challenged to move from an individual analogy of personhood with relationality viewed functionally to a social analogy of personhood with relationality viewed as constituting identity. Kegan (1982) argues that the current historical situation is an interesting one in which the majority of persons in our culture are being influenced to developmentally progress to an individual analogy of personhood, while others are being pushed even further. The latter are experiencing a developmental trend to know themselves, the world, and knowledge in new ways, and are conceived to identify with relational and social understanding out of necessity, rather than merely convenience. Person’s prejudgments (i.e., worldviews) function as guiding structures that both define and facilitate the use of varying epistemological methodologies (Shults, 2003). In other words, the knower’s methodological faith informs what they can and cannot know both about the world and themselves. Kegan intended for the model to highlight the cultural pressure to conceptualize simultaneously present relational values as two polarized and competing ideological positions (i.e., value for dualism). He did not intend for his final stage, which incorporates a social analogy of personhood, to be seen as the ultimate developmental achievement for everyone, but rather a
distinction for those who have developed different relational and anthropological values out of social and cultural necessity.

The relational turn and its value for a social analogy of personhood is not synonymous with an Eastern conception of self or higher consciousness nor with an extreme postmodern position of multiple selves. Both attempt to entirely displace or eliminate the illusion of a static and individual self (Safran & Muran, 2000). Eastern positions do so by considering the transient experience of the self as entirely a process rather than a distinct entity. The goal in such psychological models is focused on the capacity to let go and simply be. In postmodern theories, the emphasis is on the existence of multiple selves and the death of the individual self, and related psychological models seek resolution in defining and entirely creating one’s reality through linguistic and narrative formulations (Held, 1995).

The relational turn in psychology encompasses greater ontological considerations, rather than simply and primarily focusing on epistemological commitments. None of these perspectives necessarily entail the rejection of all epistemological commitments, the impossibility of truth, or the impracticability of searching for truth, but they do require greater specificity, especially in regards to social, cultural, and historical identifications and their impact on individual identity and methodological practice.

Just as the relational turn in philosophy and theology is not an altogether new development, the same can be said for relational emphases in the field of psychology (Shults, 2003). Many have held such relational and sociocultural values in large part because of their connections with Continental forms of thought and philosophy (Gergen, 2009; Kirschner & Martin, 2010). Kirschner & Martin (2010) stated, “Indeed, a long line of Anglo-American and
Continental thinkers have held that our social relations with others have primacy with respect to our psychological existence, being an indispensably necessary source for our thinking about the world and ourselves” (p. 3). They listed many individuals who held such values and were formative in the development of psychology and the social sciences including Wilhelm Wundt, James Mark Baldwin, Heinze Werner, Pierre Janet, Lev Vygotsky, George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, and Charles Cooley.

Development of the relational and sociocultural approaches has languished in psychology more so than other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and various philosophical branches (Kirschner & Martin, 2010). Purification of the field of psychology in the late 20th century and early 21st century involved purging metaphysical questioning, whether it was philosophical or religious in nature. Much of the relational and sociocultural values inherent to the founders of the discipline of psychology went unnoticed, were explicitly devalued, or were entirely lost in the translations that persisted (Kegan, 1982). A number of factors within the discipline of psychology may now be contributing to the increase in relational and sociocultural considerations.

**Possible Causes for Relational Turn**

The identification of psychology as a natural science and its continued development as a unified discipline is perhaps one of the most influential reasons why relationality is becoming increasingly more popular. The provision of scientific knowledge into direct clinical care of clients has been a perpetual source of frustration in the pursuit of a coherent disciplinary identity, and is also visible in the struggle to prove the effectiveness of various psychological theories (Held 1995). Clinical practice has often been considered merely an application of research, and
has struggled to develop a distinct professional identity of its own (Slife, 2004). Many are turning to alternative philosophies of science, more adaptable meta-frameworks, and expanding their scientific, philosophical, and theoretical methodologies in an attempt to integrate various ways of knowing and to account for what they perceive as the divide between science and practice (Bernstein, 2010; Gergen, 2009; Held, 2007; Kirschner & Martin, 2010; Richardson et al., 1999).

A general loss of confidence and interest in the predictive and explanatory power of psychological theories has also occurred as psychology has increasingly aligned itself with biological models of health and industry (Held, 1995). Empirically validated treatments tend to valorize objective scientific findings, while negating theory to metaphysical speculation at worst and an unaffordable luxury at best. Theoretical, meta-theoretical, and philosophical considerations are often deemed irrelevant in a scientific culture propelled by such rigorous analytical thinking, which leaves little room for critical thinking and personal reflection (Kirschner, 2005a, 2005b; Slife, 2004; Slife, Reber, & Richardson, 2005).

Held (1995) stated that the eclectic and integrative movements that were spurned in the 1980s and 1990s were a result of the loss of confidence in the ability of any one theoretical system to explain all of psychological reality. Two related concerns developed: Misgivings that results can be replicated across individuals who differ widely in personal and social-cultural characteristics, and distrust in the related theoretical conceptualization. Together, these doubts resulted in the implementation of interventions at the symptom level. Over the past few decades a simultaneous shift has occurred toward research on the therapeutic relationship, the characteristics and abilities of successful therapists, and therapeutic outcomes in applied/clinical
settings (Duncan et al., 2009; Norcross, 2002). With the loss of confidence in theory and recent trends in therapeutic research, many have turned their focus towards the centrality of relationship in the delivery of psychological services.

Others contend that the loss of interest in theoretical explanation can best be seen in the development of many pragmatic relational theories or therapies (Bernstein, 2010; Slife, 2004). A growing interest in pragmatism may also be a contributing factor to the increase in relational perspectives, which are clearly evident in a revival of classical American pragmatism, neo-pragmatism, some hermeneutic variations, and some constructivist-culturalist schools (Bernstein, 2010; Wertz, 1999). In such models that value practice over theory, research on common factors and/or the centrality of the therapeutic relationship often becomes the foundation for both delivery of psychological services and treatment conceptualization.

Psychology’s separation from philosophy has created a dilemma that runs to the core of the field’s identity and struggle with defining a philosophy of science. A coherent philosophy of science is paramount for the various theories of unification proposed for the future of the field of psychology (Magnavita, 2008; Sternberg, 2005). The historical severance of relationship with philosophy has contributed to psychology’s struggle to make sense of its own theories, confusion over metaphysical commitments, and tendency to polarize problems into neatly defined dualisms (e.g., modern and postmodern debate; Miller, 1992; Richardson et al., 1999). A distorted scientific vision and identity for the discipline of psychology is often unknowingly perpetuated. The result is that psychology struggles to account for the strengths and limitations of its own methodologies, value commitments, and social influence. Many seek models or theories that
account for moral and ethical considerations, but fail to consider their essential scientific philosophy (Slife, 2004).

Managed care organizations have increasingly demanded that psychologists and their interventions be effective and efficient, hence pragmatic. A market for evidenced based practices has grown, although this serves to perpetuate an over-identification with a scientific identity for much of the discipline, rather than for just those facets and contexts that neatly fit such service delivery. In many sectors, professional psychology is clinging to the medical establishment in order to sustain a viable scientific presence in a culture that values quick symptom relief and medication prescriptions, and is fueled by an economy of insurance reimbursement. Many psychologists struggle to deliver what they feel is ethical and effective treatment in light of such professional and economical pressures, and are disillusioned with these restrictions. Relational emphases, at an interpersonal level, often allow an avenue for providing psychological services in what many consider a humane manner that is personally meaningful for the clinician, while also addressing the disillusionment many clients have had with the prior medical treatment of their ailments.

Inter-disciplinary fertilization has also played a role in the focus on relationality within psychology (Gergen, 2009). Fields such as social constructivism, ethnomethodology, cultural anthropology, and philosophical anthropology have highlighted the need for greater anthropological specificity in the social sciences (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Gergen, 2009). Sociology and pedagogy in particular have had a significant influence (Gergen, 2009). Many also contend that a relational turn is occurring across other fields as
diverse as nursing, international relations, economic geography, pedagogy, philosophy, and
theology (Gergen, 2009; Kirschner & Martin, 2010; Shults, 2003).

Various cultural influences within multiculturalism, cultural psychology, and cross-
cultural psychology highlight the significance of relationships for various populations globally,
while simultaneously critiquing the North American psychological paradigm and its history
(Brock, 2006; Christopher, 2001; Fowers & Richardson, 1996; Gergen, 2009; Qureshi, 2005).
Postmodern critiques of the modern scientific endeavor in psychology have often used
multicultural platforms as a vehicle for pluralism. They have left lingering questions surrounding
the role of social and cultural factors in human development and identity formation, the
inescapable moral ideologies undergirding psychological theories, the social embeddedness of
scientific methodologies, the neglect of human agency, and the attention placed on systems and
economies of power (Held, 1995).

Infant researchers, neuroscientists, developmental theorists, and feminist theorists stress
the necessity of relationality for growth, maturation, and identity formation (Gilligan, 1993;
Jordan, 2010a, 2010b; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Richardson & Fowers, 1996). Many point to the
growth of feminist values as a factor promoting relational development and identity formation
that have become a discipline-wide emphasis (Gergen, 2009; Gilligan, 1993; Jordan, 2010a).
Research exploring the biological and neurological development that are mediated by
relationships has increased over the past decade (Beebe & Lachmann, 2003), especially as
neuropsychology continues to develop as a distinct facet of psychology.

Relational variations of cognitive and cognitive behavioral therapies have increased since
the early 1980s following the introduction of constructivist influences. Relational emphases have
continued to expand with the recent introduction of third wave contributions (Gilbert & Leahy, 2007; Lambert & Simon, 2010; Neimeyer & Raskin, 2001). Neimeyer and Raskin (2001) explored the influence of many of these models on psychology; they stated, “A middle road…is provided by a focus on the centrality of human relationships, the dialogical context in which storied accounts are actually related and identities enacted in our daily lives” (p. 412-413).

Gilbert and Leahy (2007) explored a number of different currents within CBT that highlight the significance of the therapeutic relationship, including common factors research, increased attention to emotion in CBT, social cognition, recognizing and resolving therapeutic ruptures, compassion, attachment theory, difficult populations, DBT, ACT, supervision, and pedagogical considerations.

Within diverse depth psychologies, theoretical formulations have moved to encompass increasingly varied relational and contextual implications in the clinical treatment of patients (e.g., attachment theory, relational psychoanalytic theories, intersubjectivity, interpersonal theory, phenomenology, existentialism; Aron, 1996; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell, 1988; Reynolds, 2007; Teyber, 2006; Wachtel, 1997, 2008).

It is relatively easy to locate broad relational interests and changes within the field of psychology. But differentiating between the two relational veins, an individual analogy and a social analogy, is often more difficult. Tracing the history of relational terminology first within early psychoanalysis, and then how it has developed since that time, may help to distinguish between the two relational definitions.
Relational Turn in Psychoanalysis

The phrase *the relational turn* was originally used to connote a shift within psychoanalytic theories nearly thirty years ago during the early 1980’s (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), although relational emphases can be seen within psychoanalysis prior to this time. One of the first to emphasize relational considerations was Sandor Ferenczi in the early twentieth century when he disagreed with Freud’s classical orthodoxy of intrapsychic conflict and instead posited that deficits in a client’s early environment were of greater importance and impact (Reynolds, 2007). Other analysts attempted to incorporate social considerations into Freudian psychoanalysis, although the classical drive model would continue to persist as the dominant tradition.

The relational terminology was used as a result of the growing gap between classical Freudian models and the interpersonal tradition developed by Harry Stack Sullivan (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The term *object relations* was no longer able to contain the diversification and growth of numerous theories and neither was the term *interpersonal* able to accurately portray what these theorists believed. Aron (1996) stated:

> The central objection to the word interpersonal was that it had unfortunately come to connote only external relationships between real people; the analytic position that was being developed by this new group, however, emphasized not only external interpersonal relations but intrapsychic, internal, fantasized, and imaginary relations. (p. 13)

Since this time, most psychoanalytic schools are increasingly becoming less drive-oriented and are taking on relational values for various social, clinical, cultural, and scientific reasons (Levenson, 1995). It is not uncommon for relational theories to either be posited in complete
opposition to classical Freudian psychoanalysis or in absolute disregard for all prior intrapsychic conceptions and to move in the direction that classical theory is perceived to have failed to account for (Aron, 1996; Mitchell, 1988; Willock, 2007), and they are often offered as alternative comprehensive systems, rather than partial replacements or particular solutions. Relational theories are often accused of taking the extreme stance of cultural determinism, although many are attempting to avoid both biological and cultural determinism (Wachtel, 2008).

Relational terminology is often used to describe both a broader encompassing theoretical framework as well as to identify the many specific individual relational theories (Aron & Harris, 2005; Wachtel, 2008). Psychoanalysis has developed numerous schools of thought much like Continental philosophy, in part due to its lack of commitment to any one methodological framework. Interest in relationality has grown to the point that distinguishing between individual relational theories has become exceedingly difficult. Numerous psychoanalytic traditions have been reinterpreted through a plurality of perspectives influenced by different schools of thought including contemporary hermeneutics, postmodernism, poststructuralism, social constructionism, and varieties of feminism (Mitchell & Black, 1995). This is especially noticeable in American relational theories, which have taken on a philosophical form due to the emphasis in American culture to either identify with positivism or postmodernism (Taub, 2009).

There are a number of opinions on why the relational turn occurred in psychoanalysis. Greenberg (2001) proposed that in many ways the relational turn grew out of critique of a rigidly fixed standard or framework for technique and treatment that was carried over from classical Freudian influences (i.e., biological determinism). In classical analysis (i.e., one person psychology), the therapist is pictured as a blank slate that is neither personally transparent nor
emotionally available to the client. Beebee and Lachman (2003) believe that dividing psychoanalysis into a dichotomy of frame maintaining versus frame breaking models is oversimplified. They suggested that the relational turn is partially a means of seeking an expanded theory of interaction that accounts for systemic considerations, which have developed in infant research in regards to contextualizing personality and biological development. Wachtel (2008) also stressed the need for systemic contextualization of multiple variables.

One of the most common ways the relational turn has been talked about within psychoanalysis has been through the terms one-person and two-person psychologies (Starks, 1999; Wachtel, 2008). One-person psychology typically refers to theories and therapies that focus exclusively on the intrapsychic structure of the client with little attention to environmental influences. In this model, the person is treated as an isolated mind from which their issues arise. Two-person psychology typically refers to a wider perspective, which postulates that clients are constituted in and through their relationships, both in the developmental past and the here-and-now, rather than merely developing in the past via the influence of relationships on the development of their individual minds. It is not uncommon to conceive of one person and two person psychologies as a continuum with varying degrees; many hold that no clinician actually works entirely on any one end of the continuum (Starks, 1999; Wachtel, 2008).

In a two-person psychology the therapist is viewed as an actual “other” who has significant influence on the client, and no longer is the goal of the therapist to be a detached, objective investigator attempting to discover the issues or problems within the isolated mind of the client. A two-person psychology posits that the mind is interactive and that it is motivated to seek contact and engagement with other minds (Mitchell, 1988). Contact, engagement, and
interaction in the therapeutic relationship become an important piece of the two-person psychology. Wachtel (2008) described it as “an approach to psychotherapy in which the fact that it is a conversation- rather than a one-sided examination of one person by another- is at the very heart of how the therapist understands what she is up to” (p. 9). The most significant difference in how clinicians actually practice is not whether drives (i.e., intrapsychic commitments) or relationships (i.e., interpersonal commitments) are deemed the foundation of personality but how the actual structuring of personality is viewed over time (i.e., the reciprocity or relationship of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and environmental variables).

Two commitments undergird most relational theories: Value for context and an interest in the impact on and actual constitutive nature of relationships on mental life (Wachtel, 2008). These specific values align with a social analogy of personhood that has previously been described. Viewing the history and development of this specific use of relational terminology in relational theories in psychoanalysis helps to distinguish it from its broader emphasis as a general interest. This same distinction will now be examined within the field of psychology.

**Relational Ontology and Middle Ground Theories**

**Relational ontology.** Slife (2004) espoused a relational ontology for psychology that may prove helpful in further clarifying relational veins within psychology. His model is compared against the dominant abstractionist ontology that is the dominant model for the field of psychology. He illuminates the values of both abstractionist and ontological positions through a continuum of weak to strong variations of relationality.

Weak relationality is conceived as a type of individualism or atomism, which is apparent in models of change that require the internalization of outside influences (Slife, 2004). Persons,
places, things, and practices are considered self-contained entities that receive information from the outside. Interaction in such a model is defined as the degree to which individuals act on one another or influence what is on the inside of the other.

Strong relationality is conceived as an ontological relationality, which is apparent in models of change that emphasize the quality of relating and the resulting constitution of individuals (Slife, 2004). Persons, places, things, and practices are considered to have a shared being and a mutual constitution as information is reciprocally determined. Practices are elevated because they require the continual assessment of the relationship with current context, prior actions of oneself and others, and future expectations for how those practices will continue to inform the relationship and those involved in it. In a weak relationality, practices are abstracted and objectified or are considered to transcend the relationships of which they are a part. In a strong relationality, practices are constituted by and dependent on various factors and are therefore fluid as contexts change. Interaction in such a model is defined as a dialogical enterprise in which the relationship that develops between individuals is a distinct entity from the individual mentalities of either participant. Such exchanges rely upon a systemic consideration of multiple levels of meaning at any given time (i.e., isomorphism), which values attention to process rather relying on causal determinants.

Both weak and strong relationalities value the ability to implement abstraction, although a value for abstractionism becomes an ontology when this position is the most fundamental mode of relating to reality (Slife, 2004). An abstractionist ontology is apparent in psychology’s value for methodologies, therapeutic techniques, theories, and ethical codes. There are an increasing number of areas within psychology that clearly convey values for practical two person
psychologies, expanding metaphysical considerations, or hold commitments to strong ontological relational positions. Beyond the psychoanalytic relational theories already described, several other theories that favor philosophical discourse will be focused on here as they are most clearly recognizable.

**Middle ground theories.** Held (2007) distinguished a broad band of theorists who are seeking to cultivate greater and more fertile middle ground between modern and postmodern dichotomies: Neo-hermeneutists, neo-pragmatists, and moderate social constructivists. They share two common commitments. First, they seek an alternative beyond absolute positions of objectivism and relativism. Secondly, they accept some form or definition of the *interpretive turn* as a plausible and worthy epistemological and ontological alternative for the social or human sciences (Bohman et al., 1991). Martin and Sugarman (2009) described middle ground stances as, “an ontological and epistemological combination that resists both postmodern relativism and modern essentialism, because it understands psychological kinds as constitutively dependent on sociocultural and discursive practices and contexts that both enable and constrain them” (p. 121).

Kirschner and Martin (2010) also examined a number of theoretical and philosophical approaches that espoused distinctively sociocultural emphases: Discursive and constructionist approaches, hermeneutic approaches, dialogical approaches, and neo-Vygotskian approaches. Sociocultural approaches have been nurtured by deep continental roots and hold as a central value a social analogy of personhood. Kirschner (2005a) stated:

There are distinctions to be made, to be sure, between cultural psychological, relational, dialogical, narrative, discursive, hermeneutic, and critical psychological approaches. But
if you will permit me some lumping and generalizing in this context, then I will underscore that these are, by and large, meaning-centered, contextualist (but still attempting to leave room for agency), and anti-reductionist frameworks that consider cultural realities to be as real as material realities. In truth, they go farther than this, for they consider objective reality to be mediated through cultural frames. (p. 9)

Polkinghorne (1990) contended that there are two general reconstructive trends that attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the postmodern deconstructive epistemological positions within psychology, while seeking to expand the dominant modern foundationalist perspective. The first type of response retains some commitment to a type of universal reason that serves as a vehicle for grounding statements. The second type of response re-examines ontology; it employs hermeneutic rationality as the principal means by which humans understand reality. Both types of reconstructive responses attempt to offer the possibility of a different guiding framework for psychological inquiry by exploring alternate logics and forms of reason, and are often broadly referred to as post-positivist psychologies. Implicitly, and often explicitly, these theorists are placing increased emphasis on ontological considerations without condoning or supporting epistemological positions of relativism.

These are just a few of the areas in psychology that are grappling with ontological relational values. Regardless of what ontology is emphasized all ontologies imply or assume basic ethical values and establish a moral framework for the discipline (Slife, 2004). One of the greatest contributions of the psychological turn to relationality is an emphasis on the awareness of such ontological realities via broader philosophical considerations. This paper does not deny the need for abstraction nor the value of epistemological methodologies within psychology.
However, the relational turn allows expansion of ontological considerations, while also providing a means of practically implementing philosophical discourse back into the heart of psychology. The relational turn also supports a number of richer and more specific contributions to the integration of psychology and Christianity. It is to this topic we now turn.
Chapter 5

Integration

In prior sections, the history and influence of Continental philosophy was outlined to illuminate the presence of multiple values for relationality in philosophy, theology, and psychology. Due to underlying anthropological assumptions, these variations of relationality hold very different implications for the task of integration. Theological anthropology will be examined here to illuminate both current ontological values within integration and the alternative perspectives that contemporary ontological relational values have to offer to integration.

Imago Dei

An individual analogy of personhood often drives the structural, functional, and relational conceptions of imago Dei (McMinn & Campbell, 2007; Shults, 2003). The central driving question for these theological anthropologies is focused on the number of substances that constitute a person. The relational dimension that has become popular in the past few decades, which heralds human rational and volitional capacities, espouses individuality, fits with a positivist philosophy of science, and appears practically as a form of interpersonalism.

Commitments to an individual analogy of personhood often result in a failure to take into account how conceptualizations of the imago Dei have actually developed historically (Shults, 2003). Underscoring this history relinquishes the categories from a strictly modern interpretation, which tends to view them as distinct, but overlapping categories or substances that need to be
integrated. Viewing them historically also allows the illumination of current changes that are occurring within contemporary theology and theological anthropology that are a direct result of the impact of social analogies of personhood.

By far the oldest and most typical way of conceiving the image of God has been through structural or substantive considerations. This is typically apparent through the focus on image or likeness, and follows the long tradition of substance metaphysics that asks what persons are made of and how this is related to God.

The emergence of the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship in the late 19th century shed light on how language and culture can be accounted for in the interpretation of scripture (Shults, 2003). The discovery of the Babylonian creation myth called the Enuma Elish in 1876 highlighted the similarities between Jewish creation accounts and their captors’ myths. This led to skepticism concerning the sole focus on structural considerations. The resulting emphasis on language and culture shifted the focus of the Imago Dei from explaining personal constitution in relation to God to understanding how that divine constitution was to be lived out for God’s purposes. This was typically expressed in the role or function of humanity in dominion over and in stewardship of the earth.

The third development of the imago Dei gradually shifted emphasis from the first parents of creation (i.e., Adam and Eve in the creation story) to an acknowledgment of the transhistorical presents (Shults, 2003). This emphasis was advanced by the development of social analogies of personhood discussed earlier in this paper that took form following the First World War. The human condition for the first time in history was conceived as being accessible and intelligible by the present context and ongoing relationship of creation to creator. This
existential model of the imago Dei is often called relational due to its focus on both the here-and-now and its value for the social interaction of individual persons.

Some contend that a fourth category of the imago Dei is present and currently developing further (Grenz, 2001; Shults, 2003). This is considered to be an eschatological imago Dei that emphasizes not only the abstract temporal mode of future but also the absolute future of God’s reign that has arrived and will continue to arrive. Greater emphasis in this model of the imago Dei is placed on considering the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. Structural, functional, and relational versions have tended to place greater emphasis on the work of the Father and/or Son thus far. Many theologians such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, Stanley Grenz, and Jurgen Moltmann who espouse the eschatological image of God tend to value the social analogy of personhood that moves away from a sole reliance on substance metaphysics and a psychology of the individual self (Shults, 2003). In this light, persons are viewed systemically as both having a distinct identity and yet continually being constituted by their relating to others and God (i.e., substance-in-relation). Being formed into the image of the Son involves reaching out to that which is beyond one’s self (i.e., transcendence). Inherent in this imago Dei is an emphasis on process and transformation via the shaping and constituting of persons by their relationships, traditions, and communities.

**Ontological Considerations in Integration**

Current means of integrating psychology and Christianity tend to rely exclusively on an individual analogy of personhood as this is most directly applicable to the scientific enterprise, which rests upon a number of assumptions including the distinct separation of theory and philosophy from scientific methodologies, hard distinction between objectivity and subjectivity,
exclusive reliance on substance metaphysics, and a conception of the self as a static, individual, and autonomous agent.

For example, Van Leeuwen (1988) used relational anthropology to explore the stance of Christian psychologists within the two cultures of contemporary academic psychology, one positivist and scientistic and the other post-positivist and humanistic. On closer inspection, her use of relational terminology is in line with an individual analogy of personhood. Other integrationists have also called for a more intentional consideration of philosophical, anthropological, and scientific methodological commitments, which have paralleled general trends in the philosophy of science across various disciplines over the past few decades (Bouma-Prediger, 1990; Evans, 1976; Hill, 1989; Jones, 1994; Wolterstorff, 1984).

Distinguishing between relational definitions becomes important when considering such proposals, which often rely upon unexamined ontological assumptions. Expanding ontological considerations in integration can be a fruitful and enriching endeavor—one that necessarily expands how we think about ourselves as well as our practice, and has the potential to create space for the variety of metaphysical positions inherent to religious and spiritual concerns. The potential benefits of ontological considerations in integration will now be explored.

Making room for multiple analogies of personhood allows for greater developmental sensitivity in theoretical and clinical pursuits. Posing a social analogy of personhood in philosophy, theology, and psychology is not intended to supplant the dominant individual analogy of personhood, although a number of persons in our culture (e.g., international travelers, missionaries, younger generations) are being pressed by social and cultural factors (e.g., globalization, international travel, acculturation) to identify primarily with a social analogy of
personhood. Typically, this social analogy is conceived in our culture as being a conscious and rational decision, an unexamined assumption, or even an outright rebellious position; it is deemed synonymous with *postmodern sensibilities* and must therefore reflect some form of commitment to a philosophical position of relativism (Shults, 2003). From a developmental perspective these changes in anthropological values can be better understood for what they actually mean to those individuals, to our culture, and to the work of integration. Ultimately, understanding both analogies of personhood allows for greater developmental sensitivity, which has the potential to translate into increased effectiveness of services, greater understanding of relational identification processes, and richer models of development into spiritual and psychological maturity.

For example, holding an individual analogy of personhood to be foundational requires that identity and development are conceived from an internal perspective that is influenced from the outside, which considers relationships as being secondary to others and that knowledge and experience are to be internalized for one to develop. Holding a social analogy of personhood to be foundational will conceive of identity and development from a transitional position that both values internal identity and the actual relating of it to external factors.

Personal identity in this model is conceived as a process continually in motion, rather than a static position. Such a process may best be conceptualized as a systemic model of personal adaptability. Relationships, particularly defined by their quality, are considered to actually constitute and significantly contribute to the identity of persons. Both of these positions carry very different developmental assumptions, which can be simultaneously valued and intentionally
considered in the treatment of individuals from varying positions. Few models of spiritual and psychological maturity have yet been developed with a social analogy of personhood in mind.

A social analogy of personhood places greater emphasis not only on development and relational models, but on process as well. Historically, most theoretical-conceptual models of integration have tended to be categorical in nature distinguishing distinct modes or types of integration (Carter, 1977; Carter & Narramore, 1979), which emphasize epistemological considerations. Several models have expressed the importance of addressing applied integration and the personal development and character of the integrationist (Bouma-Prediger, 1990; Bufford, 1997; Tan, 2001). Even fewer have ventured to describe integration as a process (Brown, 2004; Hall & Porter, 2004; Hathaway, 2002, 2004). This emphasis on process within the relational turn has a tendency to encourage an eschatological conception of imago Dei, and has the potential to expand current ways of conceptualizing spiritual formation. This emphasis is visible in several areas including disciplines for the individual (Coe, 2000; Willard 1998, 2000, 2002), an affective and moral basis for spiritual transformation (Leffel, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c), and direction for the spiritual director (Hardy, 2000).

The Holy Spirit is underrepresented as a topic in integration, as well as in theology in general. The role of the Holy Spirit could naturally be further explored by relational, eschatological, and process oriented perspectives (Fowler, 1996; Grenz, 2001; Jones, 2003; Sandage & Shults, 2006; 2007; Shults, 2003). Sandage and Shults (2006) stated that there is a current need to re-conceptualize pneumatology in light of changing relational values. Integration of eastern and western theological perspectives has also been at a standstill in much of the literature due to an over-emphasis on epistemological positions, which can easily be expanded by
consideration of simultaneous relational ontological values (Jones, 2003; Lowery, 2006).

Little emphasis has been placed on social and cultural perspectives within integration (Dueck, 1989; Dueck & Parsons, 2004; Dueck & Reimer, 2009; McNeil, 2005). This is also visible in the absence of focus on missiology in the integration literature (Adams, Shaver, & White, 2003; Hall & Schram, 1999). Sociocultural considerations in integration have the potential to be exponentially increased with the introduction of ontological relational considerations. This is in part due to the value in a social analogy of personhood that entirely escaping one’s worldview values in order to be entirely objective, whether they are historical, cultural, traditional, or personal, is both an impossibility and a misdirected goal in and of itself (Shults, 2003). Such sociocultural considerations may also help to foster greater awareness of when implicit American values are unknowingly paraded under the banner of Christianity, resulting in the encouragement of other indigenous forms of psychology and integration.

The examination of personal values of the integrationist is inherent to the use of ontological hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has been a topic of concern within integration literature for some time, although little development of ontological hermeneutics has been applied to current modes of conceptualization or practice (Jones, 2008; Richardson, 2006a, 2006b). Contemporary relational psychoanalysis is experiencing a resurgence of interest especially in many Christian circles (Hall, 2007; Hill & Hall, 2002; Hoffman, 2011; Jones, 1996; Jones, 2008; Sorenson, 2004; Stevens, 2006; Strawn & Brown, 2004); many of these individuals hold or promote various ontological hermeneutic meta-frameworks.

Ontological relational considerations might contribute to a more balanced view of science for integration, one that accounts for its strengths and limitations, implements philosophical
reflection, explores moral and cultural ethics, and addresses the growing gap between science and practice. Such considerations help practice to be considered a valid facet of the discipline, rather than merely an abstraction (Slife, 2004).

Relational theories and conceptualizations of integration are becoming popular (Hoffman, 2011; Olthuis, 2006; Sandage & Shults, 2006, 2007; Sorenson, 2004, Strawn, 2007). Viewing both relational anthropologies side by side also serves as an interpretive lens for the current field of integration in that it distinguishes between different usages and assumptions of relational terminology. Shults (2003) stated, “The point is that individuals with traditionalist or modernist fiduciary structures may talk about relational concepts but put them to use in the service of constructing a less complex methodological faith, which makes them prone to misunderstanding” (p. 48). Making sense of the countless relational theories is not an easy task, especially without the help of philosophical and anthropological tools.

Relational conceptualizations of integration are increasingly promoting a value for quality of relationships (Lowery, 2006). Several areas of interest have resulted, including those that emphasize the value of community (Grenz, 2001; Lowery, 2006; Slife, 2004), inheritance of Christian traditions (Jones, 2008), love (Hansen & Drovdahl, 2006; Holley, 2006; Olthuis, 2006; Watson, 2000), and forgiveness (Jones, 1995; Sandage, 2005; Shults & Sandage, 2003). All of these topics could contribute to increased integration of contemporary Trinitarian theology with psychological models of human development. Such endeavors would fill a dismaying gap that exists in congregational knowledge of normal healthy psychological growth.

Individual analogies of personhood have relied on a causal template in explaining human action that values the internal mental world as the source of all individual action, which can
easily slip into biological determinism (Gergen, 2009). Extreme social analogies run the risk of promoting sociocultural determinism if taken too far, although they offer promise for providing models of human agency as well as expanded understanding of embodiment (Frie, 1997, 2003; Welton, 1999; Willard, 2002). Social analogies of personhood attempt to overcome various dualisms that are inherent to individual analogies such as subjective and objective, self and other, substance and relations, spirit and body. In a social analogy, persons are conceived as “substances-in-relation”, which requires the integral participation and inclusion of an individuals’ body (Lowery, 2006). The body is conceived to be the means by which individuals actually grow and develop into psychologically and spiritually mature persons (Willard, 2002).
Chapter 6

Conclusion

A general relational turn that rests upon an individual analogy of personhood has been illuminated in philosophy, theology, and psychology, and a more specific relational turn that rests on a social analogy of personhood has also been described. These general and specific relational turns are often described as being largely distinct, although in reality they overlap to a great extent (Kegan, 1982; Shults, 2003). Individuals will often more readily identify with one or the other position, while cultural pressures promote polarization of them into opposing ideological positions. Such pressures are currently apparent in modern and postmodern commitments as well (Dueck & Parsons, 2004), but it would be a mistake to reduce the relational turn into modern and postmodern epistemological positions. Understanding that a social analogy of personhood exists does not require commitment to it values, nor should it be perceived as developmentally superior to prior individual values. And it certainly does not propose the acceptance of epistemological relativism. The rich philosophical inheritance of the relational turn traced back to Continental influences in the first section of this paper helped to distinguish these philosophical distinctions.

Understanding the existence of a social analogy of personhood within theology in the second section of this paper helped to qualify the importance and necessity of seriously
considering anthropological assumptions and their generalizability into diverse fields and perspectives.

Identifying interest in and potential causes of relational trends within the field of psychology in the third section of this paper helped to more precisely distinguish between a general and more specific relational turns that are simultaneously occurring in our culture. Examining these relational turns illuminated their potential impact for the field of psychology, which allowed for the reconsideration of the necessity of philosophical reflection for the field of psychology, which has historically been undervalued.

It remains to be seen how interest in relationality will continue to unfold within the field of psychology or within integration for that matter. For the time being, consideration of the relational turn in the task of integration in section four provided a much-needed vantage point to consider shifting cultural values. Some of the most important implications for integration included increased developmental sensitivity to identity formation, emphasis on models of process, consideration of the role of the Holy Spirit, expansion of sociocultural models, and a defining value for human agency.
References


The Psychological Turn to Relationality

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Appendix A

Curriculum Vita
Rusty R. Smith
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Education

Present
PsyD Clinical Psychology
George Fox University, Newberg, OR
• Anticipated May 2013

2010
MA Clinical Psychology
George Fox University, Newberg, OR

2007
MA Marital and Family Therapy
Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, OK

2003
BS Human Relations
Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, OK

Practicum Experience

2011 - 12
George Fox University Health and Counseling Center
Newberg, OR
• Brief individual therapy model with undergraduate student population
• ADHD/LD Assessment and Psychological Evaluations
• Crises Intervention

2010 - 11
Portland State University
Portland, OR
• ADHD/LD Assessment

2009 - 10
Sheridan Federal Corrections Institution
Sheridan, OR
• Individual and group therapy with male inmate population
• Experience gained in EEG and heart rate biofeedback
• Extensive risk assessment
• Cognitive, Memory, and Learning assessments for educational program
• Consultation with interdisciplinary medical team in regards to psychopharmacological management for inmates

2006 - 07  **Life Counseling Center**  
*Bethany, OK*
• Community Mental Health/Private Practice setting  
• MAMFT practicum providing outpatient services to adults, couples, adolescents, and children  
• Personality assessments  
• Crisis intervention

**Supplemental Clinical Experience**

2011  **Assessment: Providence Newberg Hospital**  
*Newberg, OR*
• One comprehensive psychological evaluation

2011  **Therapy: George Fox Behavioral Health Clinic**  
*Newberg, OR*
• Community Mental Health  
• Individual therapy with one client for 15 sessions

2010 - 11  **Consultation Project: Concordia University Counseling Center**  
*Portland, OR*
• Program evaluation and development for assessment of ADHD, LD, psychological evaluations, intelligence testing, and career assessment

2010  **Assessment: Providence Newberg Hospital**  
*Newberg, OR*
• One psychological evaluation

2009  **Therapy: George Fox University Health & Counseling Center**  
*Newberg, OR*
• Individual therapy with two undergraduate students for 10 sessions

**Supplemental Clinical Training**

2011 - 12  **Psychodynamic Group**  
*Beaverton, OR*
• Monthly case presentations and theoretical discussion

2010  **Multicultural Psychotherapy Mentoring Group**
George Fox University, Newberg, OR
- Spring semester
- Interpersonal/Multicultural Theoretical Orientation

2009
**Integrative Psychotherapy Mentoring Group**
George Fox University, Newberg, OR
- Fall semester
- Relational Cognitive-Behavioral Theoretical Orientation

2008 - 12
**Clinical Teams**
George Fox University, Newberg, OR
- Weekly faculty led clinical training
- Rotated clinical teams throughout graduate program semesters
- Case presentations, diagnostic and treatment planning, theoretical discussion, and report writing training

2006 - 07
**Psychodynamic Group**
Bethany, OK
- Weekly case presentations and theoretical discussion over assigned readings
- Experience with personality and projective assessments

**Relevant Employment**

2007 - 08 **Masters Level Intakes/Adult Case Management**
North Care Community Mental Health, Oklahoma City, OK
- Conducted intakes, supportive counseling, and case management to SMI, homeless, veteran, and co-occurring populations in an urban CMH setting
- Multi-disciplinary treatment collaboration
- Worked with male sex offenders in corrections department
- Crisis screening and assessment for clients recently released from the Oklahoma City Crisis Center and Griffin Memorial Hospital

2006 - 07 **Support Counselor**
Southern Nazarene University- Student Support Services, Bethany, OK
- Provided counseling and academic advising to undergraduate students within three primary populations: Disabilities (physical and learning), low income background, and/or first generation students
- Career assessment and counseling
- Outreach to campus included designing and leading workshops for undergraduate students on learning styles, stress management, test anxiety, and academic planning
- Planned and led student social events on campus and educational field trips off campus
• Facilitated mock medical school interviews
• Maintained program website

2005 - 06  Media Center Supervisor  
*Southern Nazarene University- Learning Resource Center, Bethany, OK*
• Media Center Supervisor  
• Supervised 7 student employees and oversaw daily functioning of computer lab and media center  
• Researched and implemented new technology for the utilization of campus staff, faculty, and students

2002  Practicum Student  
*Family Counseling Center, Oklahoma City, OK*
• Undergraduate paid practicum experience scoring assessments and writing reports for veteran population in a private practice setting

**Teaching Experience**

2011-12  TA Position in Graduate Clinical Foundations Class  
*George Fox University*
• Fall and Spring 16 week semesters  
• Taught clinical skills in both small group format and individual supervision  
• Provided feedback on student therapy videos

2011  Taught Undergraduate Class  
*George Fox University*
• Clinical Skills Development  
• Substituted for professor on one occasion

2010  TA Position in Undergraduate Advanced Counseling Class  
*George Fox University*
• Fall semester for 16 weeks  
• Taught clinical skills in a small group format  
• Provided feedback on students' video assignments

2002  International Volunteer Teaching: China  
• Undergraduate Summer  
• Taught English in Chinese universities, elementary school, hospital, and community based programs

2001  International Volunteer Teaching: New Zealand  
• Undergraduate Summer  
• Primarily worked in inner city Maori adolescent program
The Psychological Turn to Relationality

- Taught in elementary schools

**Research Experience**


2009 - 12 **Doctoral Dissertation**

2009 - 12 **GFU Research Vertical Team**
- Small group for developing research competencies
- Supplemental research projects
- Development of dissertation

**School Involvement**

2011 GFU Multicultural Committee
2009 - 12 GFU Graduate Peer Mentor
2008 - 11 GFU Community Serve Day
2006 SNU MFT Program Admissions Committee
2003 Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities
2003 Psi Chi Nomination
2003 Mortar Board Nomination
2001 - 03 SNU Resident Assitant in Upperclassman Dormitory
2000 - 03 Dean’s List

**Professional Affiliations**

2008 - 12 American Psychological Association (APA)
2010 Division 24: Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology
2010 Christian Association of Psychological Studies (CAPS)