This project details the phenomenon of ‘Intersubjectivity’, situating it in a series of essays as something dynamic that initiates and enables the emergence of subjectivity. If the term 'Inter-subjectivity' appears to signify an inter-relatedness between existing and autonomous subjectivities (the '-' literally segregating its constituent elements), then I open this first essay by inverting such a connotation of the term. Where ‘Inter-subjectivity’ suggests the participation of constituent ‘subjectivities’, I eject the break and define ‘Intersubjectivity’ as a primary mode or condition from and by which what appears later as an individual subjectivity might emerge and develop into maturity.

See above: a painting by Rafi Chehirian depicting, among others, two men: Mat Logan and Andrew Kewatt. Who is Mat Logan? And who is Andrew? Mat, turning to Andrew, would probably recognize his Andrew. I am left wondering. The artist does not provide anything further. As humans who experience the world in our own way, what are we to one another? I imagine this to be a common curiosity.

If one were to turn and look to the eyes of the other, would their distinctness as living organisms be tempered by the common denominator of their mutual participation in conscious experience? Or are these two men firmly contained and bound within their own vortexes of affect and reference?

Reality seems in one moment to suggest a radical togetherness in simultaneity, and in another instance, simultaneity without intersection – an irreconcilable aloneness. What is intersubjectivity? Is it, and How is it? This question had better be approached in the maturity of a project. I begin instead by asking what is significant about such a question. I find that it betrays a hunch – an inkling: that such a thing does exist, and that it has a role – somewhere and somehow in the totality of experience. It seems that a questioning of ‘intersubjectivity’ conceals a more intuitive wondering about the status of an other whose lived experience we can perceive, but cannot ourselves embody.
INTERSUBJECTIVITY, NOT INTER-SUBJECTIVITY

1. Origins of Intersubjectivity

This essay studies the origins of intersubjective experience. My initial task is to understand how the idea of ‘intersubjectivity’ emerges from earlier discourses in which the human mind is conceived of as a closed and isolated system. I find that the positioning of an entity (the human) against a reality external to it has contributed to a schematization of subjectivity that constrains our conceptions of the scope of human relationality. Rather than reproduce the speculative effects of the assumption of a fundamental, ontological distinctness, I build the scaffolding of my study upon a soil that offers a radical reconceptualization of human experience – its origins, its form, and its relation to the environment that enframes and constitutes it. I bring us to the terrain of psycho-developmental theory, where the emergence of human experience in one form or another is considered in a formative relation and dependence upon its environment. Essentially, I restore a traditional unit of philosophical speculation – the adult human being – to the more extensive and implicitly relational unit of its infancy: the Mother-Infant complex. I figure that the emergence of human subjectivity is from the outset an intersubjective phenomenon, and that the Mother-Infant relationship is the primary and irreducible unit from which a human being may gradually achieve (develop) a psychological interiority. Surveying psycho-developmental theory, I arrange a composite of structures of relatedness: suspensions of particular stages in the developmental course of a human being from its birth to its potential achievement of a psychical distinction from its caretaker. These ‘structures’ are essentially modelings of the scope and parameters of individual human experience within an interpersonal dimension. My challenge in this essay is to conceive – using a variety of theoretical frameworks – of the co-formation and/or interpenetration of subjective experience within a dynamic and determinative intersubjective matrix. The broad movement that I study in my consideration of theoretical schemas of relatedness is the gradual distinction of the infant from its mother, for whom the infant was once an organ. I present a set of psychoanalytic accounts of early human life by S. Freud, M. Klein, D. Winnicott, T. Ogden, and J. Lacan. I do so with the aim of harnessing their most significant contributions towards an understanding of the development of human experience as being an intersubjective phenomenon.

I give an account of the infant’s gradual differentiation from its mother through its accrual of a psychological interiority. I will show this to be an achievement enabled within the parameters of a visceral and continuous relationality between mother and infant. The first and outermost layer of this modeling is environmental: it is the dyadic unit (mother-infant) within which
the basic physiological and psychological needs of the infant are provided for. The mother at this stage is a total environment in which the infant exists in its utterly primitive state after birth. Our infant at this stage is remarkably indistinct from its caretaker. It does not yet ‘have itself’, in a sense. The second layer of the modeling introduces the infant’s gradual assumption of a bodily boundedness and continuity of being. In this primitive mode of experience we can observe the foundations for the infant becoming an ‘object’ to which experience ‘occurs’. The third layer and movement inwards marks the infant’s coping with its experience of its first love object and source of nourishment: the mother’s breast. This phase will be the site of a new framework of relationality. The infant is split, experientially, between satisfaction and frustration with an object which it does not know to be independent of it. In the fourth layer we observe the emergence of ‘subjective experience’ through a series of pivotal transformations. The infant’s gradual accrual of a psychological interiority coincides with its increasing physical independence, but also withs its development of new ways of mediating the physical and psychological rift between itself and its mother (e.g. touch, taste, and symbolization). In the fifth layer we will observe the effect of a gradual superimposition of social strictures upon the infant – the introduction of boundaries and limitations from a reality that had been up to this point, in a sense, beyond the infant’s experience of-self. With the internalization of a system of regulations from its environment we will see the infant becoming increasingly aware of itself and the fragility of its relationship with the caretakers who ensure its survival. We will see it develop the capacity and inclination to defer its desires. Finally, we will see the beginnings of a yearning on the part of the subject for a state of “completion” that it is barred from in its bio-psychological individuation.

2. Philosophy & Intersubjectivity

A representation of the mind as relatively self-contained is common in the western philosophical tradition. Contemporary historians of philosophy locate the concept of atomistic individualism among early-modern scientific (17-18th cen.) theories of our universe as a closed, deterministic system composed of matter in motion. A regard for the human mind as an irreducible, sovereign unit of philosophical speculation is apparent in the metaphysics of Hobbes, Descartes, and Leibniz. Hobbes’ materialism, the Cartesian cogito, and Leibniz’s monadology frame human experience as an inlet to the objective physical universe that forms its environment. A variety of resolutions to the problems of interaction between constituent entities of such a universe are conceived of by philosophers of the modern period¹. Kant (18th cen.) examined the dynamics between human being and environment, denominating faculties of human experience and positing forms of cognition which compose and delimit subjective experience. For Kant, a division between things for-themselves and things in-themselves splits objects of human perception (phenomena) from the existence of those objects independent of human experience (noumena). This distinction is expanded in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit (19th cen.) to

¹For Leibniz, God is the necessary, active mediator between monadic entities (the human being itself is viewed as a complex monad). Spinoza identifies one universal substance (God/Nature) of which each concrete particular is a permutation.
address the human capacity for self-knowledge (as self-consciousness: a unity of being in itself and being for itself). For Hegel, the emergence of an 'I' is contingent upon its confronting an other consciousness. In his Master/Slave dialectic, subjectivity is conceived of as differentiation – the termination of homogeneity. Hegel’s emphasis on subjectivity as a developing phenomenon in the course of the Phenomenology – and his qualification of that process as occurring within an interpersonal dialectic – will influence the 20th century philosopher Husserl, who first uses the term 'intersubjectivity'. A division can be observed in later thought with phenomenologically oriented philosophers (e.g. Heidegger, Sartre, Ponty) seeking to account for one’s experience of the other, and linguistically oriented philosophers (e.g. Habermas) regarding intersubjectivity as a phenomenon of language and communication.

3. *Psychoanalysis & Intersubjectivity*

To introduce fundamental ideas underlying a psychoanalytic approach to the human being is to look to S. Freud. Many angles have been taken in this initial approach: that Freud’s discovery of the unconscious – an inscrutable realm of the human mind – came about in the cross-currents of scientific innovation and Romantic evaluations of Enlightenment thought. That in an era without God as an unmoved centerpiece – as a container of ontological significance and as a framework for living – Freud’s writings on the development of human beings pose the question: as biological creatures, what is it that drives us? Freud eschewed some traditional problematics on the relationship between the mind and body (e.g. dualistic, metaphysical\(^3\)), and asserted instead that the ego – the 'I' – is first and foremost embodied. One’s psychological world develops not as distinct from, but rather, as embedded within a totalizing, organismic matrix. Two critical elements of Freud’s thought are (1) that the human being, unlike other animals, matures in an extended period of dependency upon its environment, and (2) that our embodied experience is composed of or constituted by bodily instincts – demands on the mental life of the human being (the body’s attempts to achieve homeostasis). Drives – simultaneously psychic and somatic – are manifested as libidinal energy. We appropriate our reserve of libido by investing (cathecting) objects in our environment. Freud introduced two significant tracts of psychical life: primary and secondary process. In primary process we are contained within a relatively insulated circuit of desire and gratification. In secondary process, the accrual of influence from the outside world may result in the internalization of organizing strictures of social and cultural origin (such as a prohibition on sexual relations with one’s mother or father). The psycho-developmental theories surveyed in this essay evolved from Freud’s radical way of studying subjectivity: a study of the particular subject’s bio-psychological development. Freud oscillates between a modeling of the human subject as primarily narcissistic and as object-related. These two poles in his speculation influence opposing tendencies in later discourse. The primary-narcissistic tendency will influence views of the human being as developing in a world constituted by its drives and internal phantasies, whereas the object-related tendency will inspire a view of the subject’s

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\(^2\) Thompson, “Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity: A Historical Overview of the Concept”.

\(^3\) Though metapsychology is characterized by some critics as a metaphysics of the mind.
constitution through its very particular relationships to its love objects.

4. Subjective Positions & Psychological Organizations

The concept of a subjective position frames my interpretation of the theoretical frameworks surveyed in the course of this essay. In parsing their accounts of the emergence of the human into subjective experience, each will be shown to give a specific account of the relationship between the infant its maternal caregiver. A comparative consideration of these relationships will serve as a sensitive indicator as to the relation, in each theorist’s approach, of the infant to the world beyond its body. A simple definition of ‘subjectivity’ is that it constitutes a parameter within which apperceptive experience can occur. The idea of a position that is ‘occupied’ by one’s subjectivity helps us to conceive of a matrix of possible positions (different permutations of modes of experiential organization) in which a shifting field of possibility for the subject may determine and dynamically modify the contours of their lived experience. The subjective position is a concept that allows us to view ‘subjectivity’ as the result of particular biological, psychological, and existential events, conditions, and arrangements. It is the embodied nature of a subjective position that seems to best define it. As its characteristics will have acute consequences for the subject’s experiential prism and framework, a position both girds & gives form to subjective reality. Such a concept directs our attention to the location of the subject in its relationship to the mechanisms, participants and dynamics composing the broader systems of life (within, between, and beyond the subject). I suggest that a rough equivalent of my term in psychoanalytic discourse is a Psychological Organization which generates, as Ogden writes, “distinctive realms of experience or states of being”. A psychological organization is ill conceived of as a phase. One does not “leave” one for another. Rather, a dialectical relationship is created between one and the next. Each psychological organization “creates, preserves and negates the other – just as the conscious and unconscious mind do in Freud’s topographic model”.

5. D. Winnicott: Mother-Infant Unit & The Mother as Psychological Matrix

"Klein paid lip-service to environmental provision, but would never fully acknowledge that along with the dependence of early infancy is truly a period in which it is not possible to describe an infant without describing the mother whom the infant has not yet become able to separate from a self. Klein claimed to have paid full attention to the environmental factor, but it is my opinion that she was temperamentally incapable of this”. (Winnicott, 1962)

D. Winnicott developed his theoretical and clinical approach to early human psychological development in a terrain polarized between two inclinations of the Freudian tradition: between the assertion of a primarily narcissistic and a primarily object-related dynamic of subjective experience (specifically, between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein’s elaborations of those inclinations). A deeply significant feature of Winnicott’s approach to psychoanalysis is that it becomes impossible to speak of ‘an infant’ – an independent organism in a

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4 Ogden, “The Depressive Position and the Birth of the Historical Subject”, p.67
state of primitivity. The ‘Mother-Infant’, instead, is the basic unit of psychological development. To study psychological development is to study the development of the Mother-Infant into a mother and infant. Critically, psychological development does not begin with the “unfolding of a biologically predetermined set of psychological functions”. Whereas Freud and Klein’s instinct theories offer biology as a matrix for a “system of psychological meanings”, for Winnicott, the biological matrix of the infant “interpenetrates a maternally provided matrix”. Winnicott accounts for three plateaus in the general movement towards differentiation between mother and infant, initiated by the infant’s physical separation from its mother at birth: the mother as environment, the mother as object, and the mother as subject. Here, Winnicott will contribute to our understanding of the mother as “environment” – as constituting the infant’s psychological matrix before it is even able to recognize her as object (as a concrete entity outside of itself). The mother within the dyad provides a holding environment in which the child may gradually develop. I elaborate on three enabling functions of the mother ‘as environment’, illustrating her role in the infant’s accrual of a psychological matrix of its own: the mother’s provision of the illusion of a subjective object, the necessity for the mother not leave the child ‘without need’, and the infant’s achievement of the capacity to be alone. I present a clinical scenario demonstrating a pathological permutation of a subjective structure in a person who has matured without a stable or adequate holding environment.

For Winnicott, early infant development hinges upon the mother’s provision of an illusion of a subjective object. This, in other words, is the “illusion that internal and external reality are one and the same”. Need does not exist, for every time the infant is in need of its mother’s breast, the breast appears and provides nourishment. Within the dyad, Ogden notes, the introduction of the breast is not noticed: “The infant does not yet have a point of view from which to notice anything. In a homogenous field, there are no vantage points, no foreground or background. Without difference there can be no perspective”. Winnicott’s concept of the ‘good enough mother’ is exemplified by the idea that her caretaking coincides with the needs of the child so as to be unnoticed. Winnicott’s concept of a ‘transitional object’ – an infant’s first ‘not me’ (but not ‘not’ me) object – illustrates a development after the provision by the mother of the illusion of her breast as something that the infant may omnipotently recreate after it has disappeared.

While Winnicott emphasizes the need for a ‘good enough mother’ (that enables the infant to develop spontaneously and without being overwhelmed by anxiety stemming from its utter helplessness in dependency), it is also critical for the infant’s future development that the mother not preempt the child in the discovery of its own needs. As Ogden writes, the “delaying of the infant’s awareness of separateness is achieved in large part by means of the mother’s

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5 Ogden, “The Mother, the Infant, and the Matrix in the work of Donald Winnicott”, p.171
6 ibid.
7 ibid., p.189
8 ibid., p.173
9 ibid.
meeting of the infant’s need before need becomes desire”\textsuperscript{10}. While the mother facilitates the emergence of the infant-as-individual, it is possible for the holding environment to be ‘too good for too long’. If the infant is “prevented from experiencing dosed frustration, tolerable anxiety, desire and conflict”\textsuperscript{11}, it will not develop ways of caring for itself. These experiences introduce difference and drive a dynamic towards internal differentiation\textsuperscript{12}.

Though both Freud and Klein’s theoretical frameworks involve the mother as the first object cathexis of the child, Winnicott provides us with a more radical understanding of the mother as the infant’s psychological matrix. The role of the holding environment is to delay the infant’s realization of its separation from its mother until it has accrued the psychological infrastructure to survive and cope with reality on its own. The infant’s “mental contents initially exist within the matrix of maternal mental and physical activity” so that the mother literally “provides the mental space in which the infant begins to generate experience”\textsuperscript{13}. What is internalized in the process by which the infant consolidates a psychological matrix of its own is not the mother as object, but the mother as environment. The infant may now develop the capacity to be alone and to “generate the space in which he lives”\textsuperscript{14}. This space is characterized by an invisible sense of containedness or tethered-ness to something which provides a sense of security (without terror, anxiety, or helplessness) so that one can be in what Winnicott describes as a mode of ‘play’\textsuperscript{15}. In order for the capacity to be alone to come about organically, Winnicott notes that the mother must enact a paradox. She must be “absent as object; she must be present as the unnoticed (but present) containing space in which the child is” (lest the child become addicted to her as an omnipotent object)\textsuperscript{16}. The infant’s generation of the space in which he lives – ‘potential space’ – is critical. For Winnicott, “the healthy individual, when alone, is always in the presence of the self-generated, environmental mother”.

What sort of subjective organization could result if one does not develop their own psychological matrix from the security of a stable holding environment? For Winnicott, the success of the process of differentiation of the Mother-Infant unit is hinged upon the “timing of the handover of caretaking from the Mother-Infant to the infant”\textsuperscript{17}. If there is a “premature rupturing of the holding environment, the infant too early becomes a reactive creature, and develops hypertrophied, rigid defense structures”\textsuperscript{18}. Ogden writes that the interruption of the invisible provision of the mother-as-environment is experienced by the infant as “impending annihilation”. Later in life, a failure of the relationship, in infancy, of the pre-self to a containing environment, may result in the “calamitous intrusion of [an] awareness of dependency on an absent mother-as-object”. I reproduce Ogden’s case excerpt:

\textsuperscript{10} ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} ibid., p.176
\textsuperscript{12} Between what satisfies or does not satisfy the desires of the emerging human subject.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid., p.180
\textsuperscript{14} ibid., p.182
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p.183
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p.182
\textsuperscript{17} ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid., p.176
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“The incompleteness of the process of appropriation to the infant of the psychological matrix was evidenced by a successful engineer who, having married a woman 20 years his senior, could only feel alive when he was working on his car in the garage while his wife was in the house. If she were not at home, he could not work in this engrossed state and would impatiently await her return. On the other hand, he would become enraged if she were to come into the garage while he was working. Her actual physical presence was experienced as a violent, unwelcome intrusion and made it impossible for him to work”19.

6. T. Ogden: The Autistic-Contiguous Position

I have illustrated the fundamental role of a maternal containing environment in which the infant may develop biologically and psychologically. From the yet undifferentiated Mother-Infant dyad I now follow succeeding stages of a process of differentiation in which we will see the emergence of an infant from the unit Mother-Infant. T. Ogden contributes to psychoanalytic discourse an interpretation of a psychological organization “generating the most primitive state of being”: the autistic-contiguous position20. From the vantage points of his clinical work with autistic children and his acquaintance with psychoanalytic tradition, Ogden argues that the Autistic-Contiguous position represents an “integral part of normal development through which a distinctive mode of experience is generated”21. I must note that Ogden’s agenda is to establish the Autistic-Contiguous position as having “primacy, equal organizing significance, and equal participation in a dialectic constituting human experience” – a response to M. Klein’s positing of the Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive positions as the two principal psychological organizations for human beings. Due to their chronological position in the historical development of the subject, in this essay I present Ogden’s psychological organization prior to Klein’s (historically) earlier elaboration of the Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive positions. In this section I evaluate the developmental significance of the Autistic-Contiguous position insofar as it may enable the acquisition of (1) a bodily boundedness and sense of continuity of being, and (2) the development of ‘healing sensory experience’, making the infant’s growing awareness of separateness bearable.

For S. Freud, the human ego is “first and foremost a bodily ego”. Freud bound consciousness or experience of self to a body that does more than contain human experience; it is experience. The Autistic-Contiguous position (A-C) should be distinguished from the pathological connotation of ‘autism’, which often connotes a closed psychological system22. Just as an inadequate holding environment (for Winnicott) may result in the development of rigid defense structures in later life, Ogden believes that pathological forms of autism feature a “hypertrophied version of the mode of object relatedness” characterizing the normal A-C organization23. In an A-C mode, experiences of sensation at the skin surface are “the principal media for the creation of

19 ibid., p.183
20 Ogden, “The Primitive Edge of Experience“, p.48
21 ibid.
22 ibid., p.50
23 ibid.
psychological meaning and the rudiments of the experience of self”\textsuperscript{24}. The sense of contiguity of one’s skin – the physical membrane enveloping and delimiting the ‘I’ – is a fundamental feature of infantile object relations, and it is cultivated through the infant’s experience of being “held, nursed, and spoken to by the mother”. Ogden expresses the idea that the quality of relationality between a human being and the objects in its experience is determined by the nature of subjective experience that is the medium for those object relations. In the A-C mode, a “rudimentary sense of ‘I-ness’ arises from relationships of sensory contiguity (i.e. touching) that over time generate the sense of a bounded sensory surface on which one’s experience occurs” (Ogden relates this to Winnicott’s note on there being the “feeling of a place where one [feels, thinks, and] lives”). It is possible to imagine the infant’s gradual accrual of a sensation of self in its registering of the various shapes, textures and temperatures that it experiences in being pressed against its mother’s body.

The normal unfolding of the Autistic-Contiguous mode of experience “depends on the capacity of the mother and infant to generate forms of sensory experience that heal or make bearable the awareness of the separateness that is an intrinsic component of early infantile experience\textsuperscript{25}”. Possible effects of the the absence, in infancy, of such therapeutic sensory experiences can be understood from a brief examination of the form of Autistic-Contiguous anxiety in patients whose psychological organization, in maturity, has not eclipsed the A-C position. Ogden writes that a particular sort of anxiety can be understood as the experience of the disintegration of the psychological organizing mode in question. A-C anxiety, in particular, “involves the experience of impending disintegration of one’s sensory surface or one’s “rhythm of safety”, resulting in the feeling of leaking, dissolving, disappearing, or falling into shapeless unbounded space.”\textsuperscript{26} Ogden writes that manifestations of A-C anxiety can include the terror that one is rotting, or that one’s means of containing the contents of the body are failing – that one’s saliva, tears, feces, blood, and menstrual fluids are literally leaking. An anxiety about falling asleep – for fear of “falling into endless, shapeless space” – often has patients wrapping themselves in tight blankets, “keeping bright lights on in their bedrooms, or playing familiar music all night”. Again, one can sense the role of Winnicott’s holding environment, or the absence of it, in the cultivation of an embodied “place where one lives”.

Of a patient who experienced the anxious terror of falling through the containing surface of self, Ogden comments that “because of the tenuousness of the patient’s sense of cohesiveness of self, she lived in constant fear of going crazy (losing “touch” with reality in a literal, sensory way). The patient lacked the feeling of sensory groundedness that is ordinarily provided by the interpersonal “touch” of our shared sensory experience of the world, which heavily contributes to our feeling of being sane”\textsuperscript{27}.

If in the Autistic-Contiguous position the infant succeeds in establishing a sense of boundedness and continuity of being, it can become possible for it to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{ibid.}
  \item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{ibid.}, p.52
  \item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{ibid.}, p.68
  \item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{ibid.}, p.69
\end{itemize}
develop the capacity for symbolization. Without symbolization, “sensory experience does not lead anywhere except back to itself”\textsuperscript{28}. A function of a pathologically autistic defense structure can be the “absolute elimination of the unknown and the unpredictable”\textsuperscript{29}. We can begin to understand the experiential origins of such a defensive structure by hypothesizing about the sort of object-relationships existing between a caretaker and an infant who develops into a hypertrophied form of autistic experience. If a caretaker is absent or unpredictable, it may be difficult for an infant to acquire experiential ways of coping with anxiety. A defense against a feeling of unboundedness or discontinuity of being can be the fixation upon an autistic shape or object which can provide one with the reassuring sensation of their existence (Ogden describes this as a ‘sensory floor’ - the bare minimum of a base-level sensory connection with reality). This can be the pressing of a thing against the skin by which we experience our body as ours, or the twirling of hair or the cupping of one’s ears using one’s hands. Ogden illustrates the sense of security that rigid defenses provide:

“The machine-like predictability of experiences with pathological autistic shapes and objects substitutes for experiences with inevitably imperfect and not entirely predictable human beings. No person can compete with the capacity of never-changing autistic shapes and objects to provide absolutely reliable comfort and protection”\textsuperscript{30}.

\section*{7. M. Klein: The Paranoid-Schizoid & Depressive Positions}

T. Ogden’s study of the Autistic-Contiguous position (the membranous psychical organization composing a primitive and foundational mode of experience) establishes a basic container for infant psychical interiority. Within this, I introduce M. Klein’s writing\textsuperscript{31} on two further psychological organizations participating in the broader dialectic which drives subjective experience. I note again that Ogden’s elaboration of the A-C position is a later development in psychoanalytic discourse. In “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms”, Klein emphasizes that object relations exist from the very beginning of life. The relationship between an infant and its first object – the breast – yields insights regarding the structure of subjective experience in infancy, in maturity, and in pathological turns of development. In the Paranoid-Schizoid (P.S) position the infant does not yet inhabit a mode that we would regard as subjective. The infant is an object to which experience occurs. It lacks an integrative and continuous experience of itself. It is in the transition into the Depressive position that the infant may begin to integrate its fragmented experiences of the world under a stabilizing, organizing identity (selfhood). A criteria by which to understand the forms of experience engendered by the P.S or Depressive position is the form of defensive mechanism particular to it; by studying what is at risk for unravelling in an anxious state, we might better understand the relational structures of experience that are enabled by a distinctive psychological organization. Klein describes the transition from the infant’s experience of part-objects (Paranoid-Schizoid) to its achievement

\textsuperscript{28} ibid., p.59
\textsuperscript{29} ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} ibid., p.60
\textsuperscript{31} Klein, ‘Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms’, and Ogden, ‘Matrix of the Mind’.
of whole object-relatedness (Depressive), relating this to her concepts of projection and introjection and to the achievement of subjective historicity.

An infant’s first love object is ‘the breast’ (not yet experienced by it as a part of something greater, or in its connection to a mother-as-object). In the reality of a schizoid infant, the breast is a phenomenon which “appears” — sometimes providing nourishment and other times causing frustration. Untethered to an identifiable object (or subject), its coincidence with the infant’s need results in the sense that it may be omnipotently recreated by the infant when it disappears from experience. The separation of experience as ‘good’ (nourishing) or ‘bad’ (causing anxiety) is characteristic of a schizoid mode. The initial relation of an infant to its caretaker is one of dependency, as an infant does not yet have the biological or psychological capacity to survive independent of another human being. In the Paranoid-Schizoid mode, the infant’s experience of this utter helplessness can manifest itself in terror or anxiety — what Klein specifies as the fear of annihilation. Klein writes that “anxiety arises from the operation of the Death Instinct within the organism”, that it is “felt as fear of annihilation (death)”, and that it “takes the form of fear of persecution”. The mother (the breast, from the point of view of the child), the infant’s sole source of safety, indeed causes the infant both pleasure and anxiety. For the mother to be simultaneously conceivable as both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ would compromise the infant’s ability to feel that it can feed without the fear of being poisoned or devoured. As a result, the infant in the P.S position splits off, through processes of projection and introjection, aspects of the objects that it experiences. The infant’s relationship to its first object “implies its introjection and projection”. For Klein, from the very beginning of life our relationships to objects are “molded by an interaction between introjection and projection — between internal and external objects and situations”. These processes build up the ego and superego, “preparing the ground for the onset of the Oedipus complex”. Projection and introjection are two psychological mechanisms by which the human mediates its experience of itself and the world beyond it.

Granted a good enough caretaker, and through a combination of fulfilment and frustration, the infant may gradually develop a psychological organization enabling it to experience its environment as something beyond its omnipotent control — as a reality external to it. In the Depressive position one no longer splits the experience of the objects that one relates to. There is an awareness of the sameness of the object over time, and of the self over time. If there is a sameness of the object independent of how I want the object to be, then I cannot constantly rewrite the history of the object. There is now a reality outside of my control. So the Depressive position is one in which the person is able to give reality to the object. Now the fear of annihilation yields to a fear that one can cause the loss of the love object. In the P.S position you do not “lose an object”. You ‘recreate it’ in that it reappears when it is needed. The transition from the Paranoid-Schizoid to the Depressive

32 Klein, ‘Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms’. p.165
33 ibid.
34 ibid.
35 ibid.
position is not linear (nor is it necessary that it ever occur, as in pathological schizoid states). In a normal developmental trajectory, however, the accrual of “maturational factors, new cognitive capacities, and a decrease in the intensity of instinctual drives” facilitates the gradual integration of good and bad part objects – the coalescence of the ego. The need for an assuring certainty about present experience yields, for the now-subject, to the ability to reckon and cope with ambivalence in reality. To accept that invested objects are both internal to oneself and independent of one’s desire.

8. S. Freud: Primary to Secondary Process

Freud’s writings on the Oedipal stage address a critical transition from the infant’s existence in primary process (where it inhabits a relatively closed, narcissistic relationship to external reality, and where it is in a circuit of desire, aim, and gratification), to its having to contend with external reality in secondary process – repressing, sublating and deferring its gratification as required by normative, cultural life (e.g. as with the incest prohibition). The infant in primary narcissism is not yet sexually differentiated. The puncturing of a narcissistic enclosure is what introduces sexual difference (masculinity, femininity, homosexuality, heterosexuality, gender identity, etc.). The infant in primary process is not object related – its experience is exemplified by desire and its gratification (or frustration). The emergence of the human being as ‘subject’ is bound up with the introduction (in this case, an imposition) of secondary process – of the emergence of the infant from its narcissistic circuit by the necessity of its maintaining the relationships vital to its continued existence. I present the role of identification in the Oedipal stage in its relation to the infant’s transition from primary to secondary process, establishing the significance of the internalization of social strictures for the infant’s evolution from narcissistic enclosure to its becoming indisputably “object-related”.

Freud writes in “Outline of Psychoanalysis” that the human being’s lengthy dependence upon its parents in the early period of its life “leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged”36. This, Freud describes as the “superego”. Action by the ego – the portion of the psychical apparatus that is connected to present reality – is “as it should be if it satisfies simultaneously the demands of the id (the store of inherited or phylogenetic-instinctual drives), the super-ego, and of reality”37. Freud makes clear the foundations of the transition from total narcissistic investment (ego-libido) to object investment (object-libido). The child’s first erotic object is its mother’s breast; (“to start with, the child makes no distinction between the breast and his own body; when the breast has to be separated from his body and shifted to the ‘outside’ because he so often finds it absent, it carries with it, now that it is an ‘object’, part of the original narcissistic cathexis38”). In the child’s relationship to its mother (first, to her breast), we see a “prototype

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36 Freud, “Outline of Psychoanalysis”, p.10
37 ibid.
38 ibid., p.68
for all later love-relations”. The self can be likened to an archaeological site that, if inspected, would betray the marks of our fundamental relatedness to the people (objects) that we invest libidinally. A human response to the loss of a love object is not decathexis, but rather, identification – the setting up of the object within the self (its incorporation). For Freud, the Oedipus Complex is a watershed moment in which identification comes to define a significant strata of selfhood. A conflict between a child’s desire to have one of its caretakers as lover – and a powerful, fatal prohibition of incest – will result in the child’s interpolation into sexual difference (through identification with the same or opposite-sex parent, in a move geared towards the maintenance of a relationship vital to continued survival of the self). As Freud writes, if one has lost an object, the “reaction is to identify with it, to replace it, as it were, from within by means of identification”40. The aim of mother-identification or father-identification in the dissolution of the Oedipal complex is ultimately the preservation of a vital object-relation.

9. J. Lacan: The Phallic Mark & The Split Subject

The theoretical framework that J. Lacan erects to account for the emergence of the human subject is totalizing and daunting (embedded, for example, in an understanding of the unconscious mind as being structured as a language)41. I introduce a contribution of his concerning the significance of the Oedipal stage. I view it as an enrichment of our view of the dynamics of the Oedipal period. Presenting Lacan’s theory as an evocation of human inter-relatedness is complicated, as his view of the human subject radicalizes the (particular) Freudian tendency towards treating the subjective world of the child as narcissistically enclosed. Here I introduce the beginnings of a child’s sense that there is something outside of its dyadic relationship with the mother.

Similar to Freud’s psychodynamic model of the psychical apparatus (comprised and constituted by the dialectic existing between an ego, id, and super-ego) Lacan structures the unconscious in orders or registers which he enumerates as Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. The significance of the Imaginary dimension with regard to the Oedipal stage is the child’s inhabitation of a psychological world in which it enjoys the experience of its mother tending to its every need. The mother is the omnipotent entity to which the child is tethered. We will see now how the Symbolic register is introduced in the Oedipus complex in the form of a (linguistic) signifier. In the Oedipal stage the child’s desire for its mother will occasion a realization of the mother’s reference to a third entity: it can be a father, or it can be an abstraction. Simply, the mother is revealed to not be omnipotent in her desiring something that is outside of her (and thus outside of the parameter of the dyad). The child begins to sense that the mother is ‘not everything’. The ‘Phallus’ being a symbol of procreative capability, it is a Phallic mark and signifier that could be what the mother ‘refers’ to (though it may be permissible to appropriate Lacan’s model without this stipulation). If the mother does not have ‘everything’, then ‘everything’ must be elsewhere – perhaps where the

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39 ibid.
40 ibid., p. 75
41 I cite Professor Ver Eecke’s lectures at Georgetown for my interpretation of J. Lacan.
mother seeks it. This will create a sense of lack in the self installing it as a condition of human experience. The child has the option to be without — to be rended of what it had in its total fusion with the mother — or to engage in a linguistic, hermeneutic act: to stake and base its entire subjecthood on a signifier that it perceives to be the ‘mark’ (the desire of the ‘other’). The congregation of subjective experience around this signification may reveal, in a therapeutic process, aspects of the way in which a subject structures their internal world.

There is more at stake in this movement than a structural transition from a dyadic (Mother-Infant) to a triadic relationship (Mother-Infant-Signifier). The introduction of the Symbolic order or register in the Oedipal stage is simultaneously its irreversible penetration of the Imaginary order. The world of images can no longer be experienced outside of language. Wilfried Ver Eecke, a practicing psychoanalyst, has told me about a method of treating Schizophrenia in therapy. It involves a ‘linguaging’ exercise between patient and analyst. The aim is to cultivate a bond between language and experience that has not been achieved naturally for the subject. Wilfried’s approach is to construct, along with the patient, a mutually significant field of linguistic significations about their shared environment. The triangulation of sense-data through language helps the patient to begin to organize a barrage of sense-perceptions into an intelligible field of meaning. Wilfried’s therapeutic approach combines a Kantian view of sense perception (as mediated by categorization, or faculties of mind) with Lacan’s theory of the subject (particularly, of the symbolic-linguistic realm or dimension of experience). The interaction between the patient and analyst illustrates a dynamic and explicitly intersubjective process by which the world is made intelligible.

“...I begin by describing objects in the room. We describe things as they appear: over there, there is a bookshelf and some of the books are neatly arranged. Others are not. Behind me there is a wall with a painting, and next to you there is a desk. On the desk there is a red book, and a folder. After we have done this for some time I ask them to describe the objects in their home. By doing this I put them in the position of authority to describe, but also to validate and invalidate my understanding about the arrangement of the space.” — Wilfried ver Eecke.
The models in this series have illustrate relational dynamics occurring between human beings within an interactional and existential (intersubjective) matrix. Here I identify a set of problematics concerning the adoption of these schematics as illustrations of the parameters of intersubjective experience.

Problematic #1: An Infant-Centric Approach

I sense that the absence of an account of the mother or caretaker’s experiences within the dyad is a critical gap in my survey of Mother-Infant relationality. Despite their participation in a relational dialogue within psychoanalytic discourse, Klein and Winnicott treat the mother differently in their work. Where Winnicott focuses heavily on the perspective of the child and evaluates its potential for psychological development based on a principle of the ‘good enough mother’ (the possibility for a constructive relationship between mother and child), Klein takes a more segregative approach: the child must learn to deal with its own aggressive tendencies towards the mother. The Freudian and Lacanian relational modelings that I have introduced provide us with a leverage point for understanding the relational dynamics that can exist once the child no longer inhabits a narcissistic circuit of desire. In the Oedipal stage, the child is made to reckon with its position within a triadic relationship (Mother, Child, and Father). In this phase, a horizon of prohibitions and limitations which had heretofore been external to the infant is internalized. For Lacan, the child’s realization that the mother is not omnipotent (during the Oedipal stage) introduces an absence – a lack. The child’s search for the phallic mark – that which it imagines the mother desires in the world beyond the dyad – represents the subject as fundamentally split. The reason that my essay has commented so little on the caretaker’s experience of the child is perhaps that it has focused on the process of individuation of the element of the Mother-Infant dyad which has not yet come into ‘having a perspective’. As Ogden writes, “in a homogenous field, there are no vantage points, no foreground or background”. Prior to the differentiation of mother and infant, there can be no perspective on the part of the infant. As Winnicott writes, “there is no Infant”. Perhaps I have inadvertently suggested in this essay that there is nothing phenomenal about intersubjective experience beyond the subject’s achievement of a depressive psychological organization and its triangulation in the Oedipal situation. This is not my opinion on the issue. My writing, however, has primarily focused on the psycho-developmental dimensions of intersubjectivity.
Problematic #2: Relation or Interpenetration?

It is not clear, from the structures of relatedness that I have presented, in what ways (that can be studied, articulated, or made explicit) the experience of a human subject relates to the experience of another subject within an intersubjective field. It is clear that in its period of dependency, a child is in a relatively totallizing physical and psychological dynamic with its caretaker. The mother as holding environment can be likened to a membrane for an organism which has not yet established its own sense boundedness. In the Autistic-Contiguous psychological organization, the mother provides the child with critical sensory stimulation and nurture, allowing it to become familiar with the continuity and contiguity of its embodied existence. In the Paranoid-Schizoid mode, the duality of the mother’s creation of satisfying and unsatisfying conditions for the child allows for the child to begin to experience the world around it beyond the parameters of its instinctual, interpretive schemas (Klein). In the Depressive mode, the child’s increasing ability to relate to itself reflexively increases its capacity to relate to the mother as a person who too experiences the world. In first identification, the ego begins to internalize aspects of its primary love object. Prior to the Depressive position, it is possible to imagine the child as being more narcissistic than object related. In its transition from part to whole-object relatedness (and from a fear of annihilation to a fear for the loss of its love object), however, the child becomes indisputably enmeshed in an interpersonal matrix. The question still remains: does an intersubjective matrix involve reciprocal (parallel) dynamics between self and other (the mother being the infant’s object-cathexis, and the infant being the mother’s object-cathexis), or is there interpenetration (the mother as love object being something more than the mental representation of the child) in relatedness? There is a drift here towards problematics that are traditionally tackled within a philosophical domain (i.e. is the object that I experience the ‘object itself’, or do I experience a highly particularized representation of it?). Rather than feign to resolve this issue, I refer to Winnicott’s wise treatment of this eternal paradox. In the beginning of ‘Playing and Reality’, Winnicott argues against the resolution of the division and parallelism that seems to define our simultaneous inhabitation of an interior subjective reality and a shared objective space. He asks that this paradox “be accepted and tolerated and respected, and for it not to be resolved” – that it is possible to resolve the paradox intellectually, but that the price of this hypothetical resolution is “the loss of the value of the paradox itself”42.

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42 Winnicott, “Playing and Reality”. 
11. Closing Remarks

The formation of subjectivity is not an implicit, immediate, or necessary result. The positing of its essential or fundamental existence cannot be the source or point of origin for an analysis of the dynamics of human experience. An implicitness of ‘being’ in the form of subjectivity – this is a totalizing assumption that I have called into account. Through a composite illustration of the human being as being constituted in a dynamic relationship with its environment, I have probed the idea of the ‘self’ in a manner that is archaeological or genealogical. But it is not a question of the origin or acute causation of human existence that I have engaged – not a meta-historical narrative of the progression from ‘primitivity’ to the current state of human living – but a question that has as its scope the developmental journey of the very specific organism that is reared from its primary environment – the womb, and thrown into a trajectory of time, relatedness to a new environment, and influence before the particular arrangements constituting its living spaces. My focuses have been the dynamics of relatedness between the emerging psychical matrix of the child and the broader environmental matrix within which its psychical interiority comes to develop. Psychoanalysis makes possible a meditation on the ‘adult subject’ as an emerging phenomenon – the result of a process that begins even with the caretaker’s imagining the child that they have not yet seen. The span of time, the memory of which is mostly inaccessible by the human subject, in which they made the most significant strides towards their eventual form – will decisively frame and situate the broad parameters of the subjectivity that they will one day reflexively relate to and identify with. This process of crystallization will occur in an environment that is arranged in a very particular way, and will unfold within the human being in a very particular way. The interchange and interpenetration of particular human life forms and their shared environments forms the terrain that I have found to be fruitful for my continuing study of the phenomenon of “intersubjectivity” – a compounding of the myriad layers, dimensions and aspects of the human effort to understand the extent of our interrelatedness.

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43 I do not mean to evoke M. Foucault’s particular usage of these terms.
Bibliography


