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LOVE IN THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HENRY MURRAY AND CHRISTIANA MORGAN

RUTHELLEN JOSSELSO

Relationships between two people are always triadic.¹ Two people are experiencing, behaving, and interpreting their meanings to one another, and this always exists within some social context (the “Third”) that gives it significance. How the relationship is named and expressed in language presupposes this context; the semiotic code anchors it in the shared meanings of culture and forms the point from which one can get a perspective on it (Muller, 1999).² Narrating a relationship between two other people always brings some wider context to bear: What the observer describes about the nature of the connection, represented through (socially constructed) language, constitutes the meanings interpreted (or interpolated) between the two people under scrutiny.

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¹I am indebted to Ed Shapiro for helping me to clarify this point. His insightful application of this idea to families and organizations is found in Shapiro and Carr (1991).

²These are essentially Lacanian ideas.

To explore the narrative contexts of relationships, I compare, in this chapter, the representation of a relationship in two excellent, related biographies: one of Christiana Morgan, written by a woman, Claire Douglas, a Jungian analyst, and one of Henry (Harry) Murray, written by a man, Forrest Robinson, an American studies scholar. Harry Murray and Christiana Morgan, both brilliant, creative, articulate, and insightful people, both by profession devoted to understanding the human psyche, had an intense and unconventional 40-year relationship that meant so much to them that one cannot reasonably tell one's biography without telling the other's. I do not yet name what kind of relationship it was because the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the challenges posed by this as-yet-unnamed relationship to those who would try to contain it narratively.

The biographies were published within 2 years of each other, so the historical context of the telling remains constant. The biographers worked from similar archival and interview material although Robinson heard the story directly from Murray (over many years) as well. They cite each other's work. Neither seems to have had "factual" information the other did not, so the differences between the narratives are a matter of interpretation and viewpoint rather than "fact." (I have not read the primary sources as I am interested in comparing these biographical narratives, not in creating my own.)

Christiana and Harry, if I may refer to them this way, especially when focusing on their more private selves, struggled throughout their time together to represent and contextualize what was occurring between them. They left voluminous letters, notes, journals, dialogues, and draft chapters of unpublished books that detail the nature, events, and history of their relationship and what meanings they made of it. For them as well as for their biographers, the problem lay in finding language (or metaphor) adequate to the complex, intense, and transmuting feelings they had for one another. To say that they were in love or loved one another communicates little about the nature of this experience, for such a statement presumes some shared, agreed-on understanding of love. Love often, or perhaps always, contains irrational elements that defy logical or even psychological categorization. Christiana and Harry, both psychologists who contributed significantly to depth psychology, in part saw their life work as articulating in some communicable way the nature of the kind of love they created together.

Their effort was "to discover and represent the truth of the human heart" (Robinson, 1992, p. 261).³ They understood that love is both an overcoming of self and an enlargement of self. Christiana wrote, "The moment we met I

³All Robinson (1992) quotations cited throughout this chapter were reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Love's Story Told: A Life of Henry A. Murray*, by Forrest Robinson, pp. 102, 112, 113, 115, 121, 156, 157, 158, 169, 170, 172, 193, 195, 204, 208, 248, 249, 252, 255, 256, 261, 265, 302, 323, 324, 330, 354, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Copyright © by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

knew that we were one. . . . The feel of his body before he even spoke—was an answer of joy and power” (p. 323). Harry wrote at the same time that what was between them was “synergy—taking into oneself the highest potential of the other and giving to it” (p. 324). Their story was one of a particular and unique experience of union and can be told in very different ways as I shift the context to try to make sense of it. I offer first a fairly detailed reading of the two biographies because I want to highlight the biographers’ use of language and viewpoint in narrating this relationship, in full recognition that there is here no correct reading, only interpretive stances.

THE BEGINNING

The story began straightforwardly enough. Harry Murray, a 30-year-old upper-class patrician New Yorker, Harvard-educated biologist, physiologist, and physician, married father of a daughter, met the 26-year-old Christiana Morgan, a Boston-bred, upper-class, restless, largely self-educated, married mother of a son, at a concert in 1923, a meeting he remembered sharply but that made little impression on her. The crucial moment occurred a few months later when, seated next to him at a dinner party, she asked him if he preferred Jung or Freud. He had read neither, but subsequently did so. This question changed both of their lives.

Here the biographical renderings begin to diverge. Robinson chooses to first narrate this period of Harry’s life as an intellectual biography, tracing the origin and unfolding of his fascination with the unconscious, represented in the works of Melville and Jung, as developments seemingly independent of Christiana. In Robinson’s story, the intellectual metamorphosis in Harry induced by Melville and Jung occurs before Christiana is introduced as a character in his life, although it becomes clear that Harry’s intellectual excitement, from the dinner party through the next 40 years, was inseparable from Christiana. “There was no separating work and love, for depth psychology and Christiana Morgan were intertwined in Harry’s thinking” (p. 112). Yet, to tell their story, both biographers narratively separate work from love, if only to try to examine which is which and how they interconnect.

Robinson’s version has Harry and Christiana falling in love before they go to England a year later, joined by their interest in Jung. But how to characterize and describe the nature of this love? He describes the early period as “an affair of the mind” (p. 102)—but says that those around them saw “what was happening” and their spouses suffered because of it. “They both recognized that something powerful had them in their grip.” Mike, Harry’s younger brother, “was also fascinated with Christiana.” It was on the ship sailing to England, where Christiana was to join him, that Harry first read *Moby Dick* and allowed Melville (as well as Jung) to lead him to a lifetime effort to understand the depths of the human psyche.

On the surface, then, Robinson tells this story as the familiar drama of two married people struggling against their attraction for one another to preserve the social order. But in psychological terms, Robinson's understanding of this early period was that "their powerful attraction for each other" had its mysterious origins "in the unconscious recesses of their fullest selves." His reading is that they were each breaking free of the "libidinal bond with the devouring parent . . . to rise toward the expression of his or her full creative potential . . . a way to sanity and health" (p. 103). Robinson uses Jungian terms to paint them as "opposites that attract, anima and animus, incomplete beings made whole by union." Robinson initially describes Harry as finding in Christiana a

gateway to the unconscious; she gave him access to the submerged human terrain that he was setting himself to explore. Thus between them they were a whole world. The united subject and object of passionate inquiry. Christiana was his love and work; he hers. (pp. 112–113)

She offered him "resurrection . . . the promise of . . . a new, fully individuated self" (p. 115).

The surrounding social climate that Robinson describes is one of "probity"—Harry's intense attraction to Christiana "so ran against the grain of what he had been trained to expect of himself" (p. 106). He worried about the immorality of adultery (although he had had previous extramarital sexual relationships and had struggled with impotence) and the possible sacrifice of the security and social standing he had achieved through his marriage to Jo Rantoul, his practical, outgoing, socially perfect match.

Douglas (1993) tells a related but different story about the beginning of the relationship. In her portrait, Christiana is an intense woman who wants to lose herself in feeling and was always attracted to idealistic men. She was prone to depression and moodiness. Her marriage to Will, "a perfectly dear boy," (p. 63)⁴ fulfilled her neither emotionally nor physically. Bored, Christiana had had affairs with a number of men, including Chaim Weitzman—and, according to Douglas, also with Harry's younger brother, Mike. In Douglas's reading, Christiana showed no very special interest in Harry before they all went to England. In contrast to the staid, repressive Victorian social climate that Robinson details, the social surround that Douglas describes was one of bohemianism and sexual experimentation that was relatively open and accepted (in Bloomsbury fashion). When she began her affair with Harry, presumably this relationship was open as well. Christiana was, at the time, in a close friendship with Jo and with Mike's wife as well.⁵

⁴All Douglas (1993) quotations cited throughout this chapter are from *Translate This Darkness: The Life of Christiana Morgan, The Veiled Woman in Jung's Circle*, by C. Douglas, 1993, New York: Simon & Schuster. Copyright 1993 by Claire Douglas.

⁵The matter of Mike is one "factual" contradiction in the two stories that may or may not be important. Evidently its documentation, unlike all that happened after, is less clear. But it seems to me

While the whole group (Harry and Jo, Christiana and Will, Mike and his wife) was occupied with exploration of the ideas of Melville and Jung, pondering the mysteries of the inner life and the unconscious plumbed by both, the intellectual fervor belonged primarily to Harry and Christiana. Douglas explains that for Christiana, through the discussions with Harry about Melville and Jung, "attraction grew into passionate fascination" (p. 122).

At this stage, when Harry and Christiana were merely talking about the *idea* of erotic love, they expressed their unclear feelings by comparing them to what they were reading. This added a complicated literary overtone to their infatuation, in which Jung's ideas and Melville's literary parallels merged to become the instruments by which they opened up their world and their psyches. (Douglas, 1993, p. 123)

Thus, there was a social context in which Christiana and Harry were intensely interconnected with each other and with ideas that featured exploration of the unknowable but seductive unconscious. The social context, depending on the version, either allowed or prohibited extramarital sexual involvements. Eros, and what it meant, was, however, very much present in both experience and inquiry—and, it seems, in the group context.

In terms of the psychological context, both biographers' versions stress the idea of merger as a context for understanding the deepening of feeling between Harry and Christiana. Douglas writes, "Part of the joy of their discussion lay in the fact that they responded as if they were one person, Harry having the formed thoughts that Christiana could admire and Christiana making the leaps of imagination that transported Harry" (p. 125). But Douglas at this point adds a Narcissus metaphor to their bond: "Typologically brother and sister, they each gazed at the other's face in the pool, failing to perceive that they were attracted to their own reflection" (p. 125). Interpreting further, she adds that Christiana embodied for Harry "an unknown but injured aspect of himself" (p. 126). In Melvillian terms that Robinson echoes throughout his work, Douglas writes that Christiana "called" him the way, in Melville's work, Isabel called Pierre and the whale called Ahab (p. 128).

Thus, both biographers use Romantic and Jungian lexicons as well as Melvillian literary parallels to name the "call" that Harry and Christiana heard from one another. This vocabulary of attraction, which existed in the context of passionate connection to ideas, includes terms and metaphors of union, excitement and being stirred, narcissistic reflection, healing of internal wounds and lacks, life-giving energy, and creative self-expansion.

to make a difference in how Harry and Christiana may have experienced their connection. In Douglas's version, Mike went with them to England in a special relationship with Christiana that must have been apparent, if not acknowledged, to Harry. In Robinson's version, Mike fell hopelessly in love with Christiana while they were in England and Europe. (The meaning of the role of "others" in this relationship lies relatively unexamined by both biographers throughout.)

In both versions, Harry, in part prompted by his confusion over and fear of his intense feelings for Christiana, visits Jung, who discourses on the importance of the anima embodied by a particular woman. Jung offers his own situation of open involvement with both his wife and Toni Wolff as a model for Harry.

Harry returns to the group filled with enthusiasm and insight gained from Jung and proposes a similar arrangement for himself, Jo, and Christiana. In Douglas's version, this proposal is explicit and discussed among the two couples and initially, neither Jo nor Christiana accepted the idea. Douglas explains that Christiana hesitated because she wanted him to "recognize her for herself and not just as his inspirer; nevertheless, she felt attracted by the extra energy his idealization gave her" (p. 133). In Robinson's version, Jung's suggestion to Harry is never openly discussed.

Eventually, while the group was on holiday together, Harry climbs onto Christiana's balcony and they make love for the first time, according to Robinson. Douglas is less clear that they had sexual intercourse. Robinson takes their physical lovemaking from here on as evident, but Douglas notes that Christiana was frustrated by Harry's sexual reticence and his not making love to her physically. Christiana, in Douglas's version, understood his need for her as an anima and felt his demand for her responsiveness to his ideas and her offering of her own, but was confused and distressed by his lack of physical passion. Douglas's reading of Christiana's journals led her to conclude that Christiana was worried that Harry treated her like an imaginary idea rather than a physical woman. Still, Christiana was entranced by finding herself in him, intensified and empowered. Douglas quotes from Christiana's journal: "There seemed to be only the slightest definitely focused sexual feeling—only a great live awareness when we were together" (p. 137). "I felt that—I was a divine goddess to him . . . but he fled from my lips" (p. 138). Robinson also notes Harry recoiling from the "sexual as from a descent into the pit" (p. 158) and his "hesitation to take fire sexually" as a concern to Christiana.

The role of sexuality in this relationship was, then, still very much in process between Harry and Christiana at this point. That their connection was erotic and passionate was clear, but not in the usual paradigms of sexual experimentation or intense physical attraction. It was not a simple "affair" in contemporary terms: The nature of the connection they felt was precisely what they set out to discover.

THE RELATIONSHIP MATURES

One challenge to the biographers was to understand Jung's role in the evolving relationship, for he and his theories were more and more becoming the grounding framework for Christiana and Harry's understanding of what

was happening between them. Jung had given them a context for their feelings for one another, as well as a model, by naming the role that Christiana was to occupy—that of *anima*. From the time of Christiana’s analysis with Jung, beginning in 1926, the meanings the biographers assign to the unfolding relationship begin to diverge. Douglas is critical of Jung for trying to help Christiana take on the role of inspiring Harry—becoming his *anima*, his *femme inspiratrice*, rather than helping her to develop her own talents. Jung’s instruction to her was to create Harry rather than herself. Christiana’s intense visions, which captivated Jung (and formed his *Vision Seminars*), led to an explosion of passion in Harry. “The trances fertilized their lovemaking” (Douglas, 1993, p. 162). Jung had unleashed her eroticism and sexuality and she, in turn, liberated Harry. “Harry had the imaginative capacity and erotic resourcefulness to meet Christiana in both her worlds while helping her to keep one foot strongly in reality” (p. 162). In her visions, Harry found the embodiment of his own, their shared, and the universal unconscious that so entranced him. Douglas is never at peace with Christiana serving as *anima* for Harry; Robinson embraces this role for her but doesn’t think she did a very good job.

Just after beginning her analysis with Jung, in response to Jung’s urging, Christiana wrote Harry a crucial, lyrical letter wondering whether they could give themselves to one another in the context of an open relationship with their spouses—and telling him she intended to talk to Will about it, suggesting Harry show her letter to Jo. In Robinson’s version, both Harry and Jo as well as Will come to Zurich later that year, and Jung and Toni Wolff try to explain to the spouses the nature of Harry and Christiana’s needs for the other; both acquiesce to the arrangement. (In Douglas’s version, Jo and Jung meet only briefly many years later.) Thus, Jung, both in his theoretical context and his living arrangement, provides a contextualization for Harry and Christiana’s relationship, but it is unclear how much active involvement he had. Christiana understood from Jung the need to synthesize body and soul, feeling and thought, sexuality and spirit. Her hope was that she and Harry would pursue this journey together, following Melville. “Let’s do it, Harry!” she wrote. “To go on with what Jung has begun would be the biggest thing that could be done at the present time. Is there a bigger whale or a whiter whale than the chains of the outworn attitudes which fetter and hinder the spirit?” (Robinson, 1992, p. 156).

Robinson, who at this point begins to see Christiana as a force threatening to distract Harry from his “important” work, starts to depict her as the impetus for a quest to create an example for the world in their relationship, taking a lead she insisted that Harry follow: “It is fair to say that she was the more adventurous of the two, if we add that an admixture of desperation on her side was a good part of the difference between them” (p. 157). Christiana was more willing to plunge into the darkness and chaos within. In Robinson’s version, Harry hesitated while they were apart.

At a distance of several thousand miles, he had begun to waver, most especially out of concern for Jo and Will. But he was also determined to protect his new career, both from distraction and from . . . scandal—divorce and kindred personal embarrassments—that had cost others at Harvard and elsewhere their jobs. (p. 157)

But in Douglas's version, Harry used social concerns to mask his competition with Christiana's inner life. Harry described them as "two whirlpools" in a power struggle "for dominance and centrality" (p. 188).

Once at Harvard, in 1927 they became work partners at the Harvard Psychological Clinic and lovers with their own apartment nearby for clandestine meetings that were nevertheless an open secret. But their relationship still could not be classified in the usual categories of man and mistress. For Harry, Christiana's visions embodied the unconscious and his fascination with Melville, the pivotal wellsprings of his intellectual work. Here Robinson calls on the word *enthralled* (i.e., in thrall to, in servitude to) to describe Harry's connection to the inner resources he found in Christiana (or in the spaces they created together). In 1927, in words quoted by both biographers, Harry acknowledged that her trances

"represent, express, order our love. Thus they are central. We cannot go ahead without them. They are our language. . . . Our purpose is the creation of a trance epic. . . . I do not know of anything as big as this ever being attempted, but I feel fully capable of doing it *with you*." (Robinson, 1992, p. 169)

Both were committed to this project, but who was more committed at any given time seemed to vary. In Robinson's version, Christiana soon after gives Harry an ultimatum in which he has to choose between his commitment to her and their project in regard to her visions and his commitment to the Harvard Psychological Clinic and to Melville. According to Robinson, Christiana faulted him because "too much of his time and energy was going to the Clinic and to Melville; not enough to her truth as it unfolded in their relationship" (p. 169). Robinson seems to grow increasingly unsympathetic to Harry's investment in his passion for Christiana and their creation of what they believed was a unique relationship, although he dutifully cites from Harry's letters:

"You are the center of my world and the compass of all my hopes. . . . Your center is spiritual and your truths soul-truths, so you must determine the climate for our life, and be the leading principle of our life. . . . Keep me at the center." (p. 170)

From any reading of their letters and journals, it is clear that they believed the story of their union would transform the world. "They had been called as a couple to take a leading role in the history of the human spirit" (p. 170).

In Robinson's recounting, it was Christiana who named them Wona and Mansol, special mystical and mythical names that embodied the larger meanings of who they felt they were for one another. In Douglas's telling, they did it together. As his story progresses, Robinson starts to intensify his portrait of Christiana as a woman who engaged suffering for its own sake, who regarded herself as having a tragic destiny, full of "pain," "panic," and "desperation." Harry, in Robinson's version, although "he had a certain penchant for darkness," was "surely the much brighter hemisphere of the dyad" (p. 171). "It was her part . . . to suffer . . . Harry's to heal." "Sex was the rapturous sequel to pain"—Christiana's pain. "He worked; she waited. He called; she dropped everything to be with him. . . . When Harry was with her alone, she flourished, but when he was gone, . . . it was all emptiness and waiting" (p. 172).

Douglas, however, goes to great lengths to document Christiana's involvement in and contribution to the Clinic, stressing that she did not demand credit for her ideas, ideas that were claimed by others. The central example is the Thematic Apperception Test, for which Christiana was initially listed as the first author but her name was later omitted altogether from the test; Murray has generally received all the credit. In telling about the evolution of the relationship, Douglas wrote,

Murray would imbue their romance with almost archetypal grandeur in an effort to increase its power over him. . . . When they were together, their love flourished and was often filled with intense passion and drama, but it lacked consistency. The nature of their love and the amount of time they spent together changed with the tide of Murray's enthusiasms. . . . Christiana, always preferring ecstatic intensity, grew to equate the strength of their brief peak moments and of her yearning loneliness with deepening love. (p. 207)

Douglas grows impatient with Christiana waiting for Harry, spending her time writing about their relationship, and wants her to claim her own agency and to realize her unique talents in the world. Perhaps Christiana, she suggests, began to feel exploited and used, like any other mistress, and perhaps the archetypes, the anima role, their plan to write the *Proposition* which would offer their relationship as a kind of salvation to a repressive, shallow world, were just empty and hollow props.

As time went on, the relationship became increasingly filled with intricate rituals and ceremonies that celebrated aspects of their meaning for one another. In Robinson's voice,

The elaborate naming and ritualizing and recording were to become more and more characteristic of Christiana. She viewed herself as the inspiration for the dyad, the agent through which its forms emerged, and its holy scribe. Her passion for ceremony and record-keeping was at once the measure of her spiritual involvement with Harry and of her fear that

the high romantic life she longed and grasped for was falling away. It was symptomatic of the frailty of her ecstatic dream that it required constant refabrication. . . . For Christiana, quivering intensity itself, almost regardless of its source, was increasingly the goal. Harry played along side her in the drama of the dyad. He believed, as she did, that they were bearers of a precious message. He was Mansol just as surely as she was Wona. . . . But Harry had several parts to play, while Christiana had but one. (p. 193)

Robinson depicts their relationship over the next years as a “pattern of crisis and reconciliation. . . . They theorized their relationship in terms of repeating cycles of stability and instability, permanence and change” (p. 195). But Robinson theorizes their relationship in a different register:

they made a virtue of painful necessity. . . . Christiana was in love with the idea of herself as anguished inspiratrice; Harry was in love with the unconscious. The objects of their loves met and coalesced in the anima. Thus, by the brilliant, lethal economy of the dyad, she suffered, he explored and they called it love. And love it was, of course. They made a world and a life of it. (p. 195)

Here, it seems to me that Robinson has moved into irony as a response perhaps to the difficulty of languaging the passionate, elaborate, ritualized, mystical other-worldliness of this relationship. And, he seems to be saying that he finds it hard to believe their conviction that what they were doing with one another falls within a definition (that he could accept) of love. Perhaps they loved something else; perhaps the intensity itself was “lethal.”

Although the biographers’ reports are not clear about the dates, around 1930 Harry had a brief infatuation and affair with another woman at the Clinic and he seemed to break with Christiana for about a year; this new involvement, in Douglas’s version, led Christiana to have a “nervous breakdown” and stay away from her work at the Clinic. Later, the couple has an intense reconciliation and recommitment to their relationship as part of which Harry proposed to build a Tower (like Jung’s) on Christiana’s land to commemorate their relationship, express her visions, and create a retreat for contemplation and creative work. They begin a volume of quotations and poems to illustrate their history together.

In Robinson’s view (Robinson still wishing Harry would write his Melville biography), Harry returns to Christiana to reclaim “the first and only living source of inspiration available to him . . . in hopes that she could awaken in him the energy and eloquence to write what they both knew about Melville and love” (p. 204). “They agreed to think of the dyad as having three phases—*vision*, *synergy* (the living unity of two in one) and the *proposition* [italics added] (the representation of their love in words)” (p. 205). Citing Christiana’s writings, Robinson notes that this was also a time of strongly reemerging sexual energy and activity.

Throughout his biography, Robinson refers to Harry and Christiana as “the dyad,” which appears to be a term Murray used. Douglas never uses it. Robinson says that Christiana avoided the term, disliking “its binary emphasis, and stressed instead the unifying absorption and interpenetration of their lives” (p. 323). Douglas often refers to their relationship as an “affair,” a term that I doubt that they would have found suitable. This was a relationship without a satisfactory name, for to name it would be either to sunder the union that formed “two into one” or to try to place this union in a social context that did not exist but that Harry and Christiana hoped to create in the written work (the *Proposition*) they envisioned together. The goal of the *Proposition*, as Harry phrased it, was to try to represent their love in words.

Both biographers tried to capture the process of this relationship, for it was never static. In Robinson’s words,

They never lost sight of their creative, passionate, mutually reinforcing, life-affirmative ideal. . . . They recognized that their task was not to arrive at some fixed point but rather to keep moving and adapting and experimenting. . . . There would be painful changes and bitter sacrifices along the way. Nietzsche’s yoking of creativity and destruction was axiomatic with them. (p. 208)

The imaginative worlds of Melville, Nietzsche, and Jung provided soil from which Harry and Christiana drew inspiration and in which they felt they could locate their shared experience of one another. Their concern for the larger social context in which they actually lived becomes increasingly less important in both biographies as they struggle with how to describe and name their own context. Robinson persists in depicting Harry as a man of traditional moral scruples who felt very guilty about his relationship with Christiana. Each had other sexual relationships that seem to have been examined in the context of their meanings to their own relationship—jealousy and possession were idiosyncratically constructed. Christiana, though, had the unfortunate penchant for taking lovers who could not bear her terms and there were at least two suicides among them.

Christiana’s husband, Will, died in 1934, leaving her free to move into the Tower that she and Harry had built. But, as she grew older, Christiana

had more and more difficulty accepting the ebb and flow of Murray’s attention. . . . She wrote and spoke of how tired she was of the perpetual pendulum swing of his affection. Yet the very absences, the dizzying peaks and valleys of their affair, lent a frenzied intensity to their lives that both of them craved. (Douglas, 1993, p. 216)

In their Tower, in which every architectural and decorative detail—carved, painted, and sculpted largely by Christiana—symbolized some aspect of their relationship, they established a secret life of “creative intensity.” In their identities of Wona and Mansol, they “invented laws, contracts, didactic for-

mulations, rituals, celebrations and feasts for a multilayered fantasy realm—a play world imbued with lusty eroticism” (p. 223). Harry would write there, with Christiana lying nearby, trying “to concretize the subtle alchemy that sometimes plays between creator and inspiration” (p. 226). Christiana took Harry’s failure to create his Melville book as her failure to properly inspire him, although she dedicated herself exclusively to this effort. But, in Douglas’s reading, she felt that “Harry’s expectations of her were impossible for anyone to live out and made her feel sad, submerged, frightened, and broken” (p. 230). Robinson, however, says that Harry abandoned the biography “to save the dyad” (p. 248).

This period, characterized by words such as *passion*, *intensity*, and *energy*, coincided with the flowering of public creativity in the Clinic, work shared and engendered by Harry and Christiana, as well as in the private creativity of the Tower. *Explorations in Personality*, the Harvard Psychological Clinic group’s major work, for which authorship has often been attributed (in citations) solely to Murray, but to which Christiana also made significant contributions, was published during this time.⁶

THE FAR REACHES OF SEXUALITY

As the intensity and exploration in this relationship increased, both biographers had to struggle with how to contextualize Christiana and Harry’s “increasingly complex and idiosyncratic” (Robinson, 1992, p. 252) sexual relations that featured the introduction of pain into their sexual expression. Some summarizers of these biographical works have simply said that they were “into sadomasochism” as though that describes or explains. The biographers, however, worked much harder than this. According to Robinson,

[The dyad] . . . took them to the endurable limit of contradiction and intensity, pain, passion, narcissism, and joy. . . . Their sexuality blazed as never before; but it became more complex and more violent as its fires reached their peak. (p. 249)

Douglas introduced this aspect of their life together in terms of their “daring to explore the darker sides of their sexuality. . . . The rituals they invented for this search condoned violence as well as excess” (pp. 260–261).

Harry and Christiana left a detailed record of their sexual activities, but the biographers could not depict these activities without implicit interpretation. According to Robinson, Christiana took Harry’s willingness to inflict pain as “the sign that he had passed beyond good and evil” (p. 249) and,

⁶Authorship is attributed to “the workers of the Harvard Psychological Clinic” with Murray listed as first author. The next authors are a group of six. Only two of the six do not have doctoral degrees: Christiana Morgan and Erik Homberger (later Erikson).

because it heightened their sexual pleasure, it was also an aspect of her control over him. His need for her to whip him was a sign of his submission to her superior force. All of this was chronicled in mythic terms, part of Christiana's hope that he would write their story. She wanted him to articulate her visions, to translate the irrationality that mesmerized them both into language. Harry writes about wanting to let the world know of "the dark and ultimate love between man and woman." (p. 255)

Douglas saw these activities as a way for the lovers to charge up the intensity in a relationship that was cooling, an interpretation that Robinson seems to share. Douglas's view, though, is a bit more physical, less mythical. She writes,

Both enjoyed living on the crest, for drama, intensity and peak experiences, yet both had difficulty attaining this orgasmically—Murray having problems with potency and Morgan, after her sympathectomy, with normal sexual response. (p. 262)

THE WAR YEARS AND AFTER

During the war, Harry was away most of the time. Christiana underwent a radical sympathectomy and had bouts of depression and despair. During this time, her love relationships with Alfred North Whitehead and Lewis Mumford, both of whose work she inspired in anima fashion, intensified and comforted her, but did not touch the regions that she and Harry shared. According to Douglas (1993), she became during this time increasingly enslaved to Harry as he became increasingly disengaged from her. After the war, Christiana reclaimed her power, demanding that Harry refocus his attentions on her as master, which seemed briefly to restoke his passion, but he then spent more time away from her while demanding that she write their *Proposition*, the history of their relationship. Alternations between periods of intense closeness and tense distance marked their later years together.

Christiana devoted herself to carvings and artwork that would represent the relationship in embodied form in the Tower. Robinson (1992) wrote, "The building was conceived as an allegorical construction, a harmonious composite of the elements—mind, body and spirit—that Harry and Christiana sought to develop and integrate in their union" (p. 256). Their quest together was for human wholeness. Christiana titled the story of their union *What Joy!*

Neither the Melville biography nor the *Proposition* was ever completed. Christiana increasingly struggled with alcoholism; she and Harry both drank quite a bit, together and separately, but she had difficulties with control. Jo died in 1962 but Harry and Christiana never married. While on holiday with Harry in 1967, Christiana drowned in 2 feet of water. At the time Harry was

involved with another woman whom he later married. By Harry's account, his last words to Christiana, finding her in an intoxicated state, were "You're disgusting." There is no way to know if her death was an accident or suicide.

THE BIOGRAPHERS' STANCES

All biographers develop complex emotional relationships with their subjects (Schepeler, 1990) and both Robinson and Douglas seem to have been fairly transparent in their stances and feelings about their subjects. Like two therapists treating members of a married couple, the biographers absorbed the dynamics of the relationship itself. Both admired, even venerated, their own biographical subjects, though grew impatient with what they considered to be their relational excesses, and were annoyed at the "other" and sometimes at the relationship itself. Both wished their subject had achieved more and (subtly or sometimes overtly) blamed the other member of the couple for holding their subject back. Douglas believed that Christiana Morgan, like many women, contributed much, much more to the achievements of her partner than has been acknowledged, and was outraged about this (as well as at Jung's treatment of her). She tried to redress this by detailing Christiana's independent contributions to psychology. In her feminist reading of Christiana's life, she concludes that "Morgan channeled her creativity into a relationship with a mercurial and inconstant though brilliant man and never developed her self-reliance or her own inner resources" (p. 303).

Both noticed that Harry was the more ambivalent of the two, the more likely to provoke the separations and distance. Douglas, taking Christiana's side, saw Harry as unable to fully commit himself to her vision, to her depths; he held on to his rationality. Robinson, however, thought Harry allowed himself too much irrationality where Christiana was concerned. Douglas worried that Harry may have been exploiting Christiana in the ways men have always exploited women as mistresses and was never as fully committed to the relational project as was Christiana. Robinson (sometimes) regarded Christiana as a grasping, demanding, insatiable woman, a seductress drawing Harry away from his family and his serious work which, because Robinson came to Harry's work through a shared interest in Melville, he saw as primarily the completion of the Melville biography. Robinson also seems to me to be more conventional than Douglas in his grounding, more protective of the social order, liking Harry best when he was the "great man" the public saw or the good family man sharing comfortable, companionable moments with Jo. Douglas, as a Jungian, seemed to resonate more with Christiana's visions as an *entrée* to the unconscious.

After considering and weighing massive quantities of material, each biographer organized a narrative that in his or her view best represented the

material. Both wrote, to my mind, in evocative, lyrical, and psychologically sophisticated terms, quoting widely from their subjects but adding their own interpretation of the documents at hand.⁷ Neither could tell the story of his or her own subject without telling the other story as well, so enmeshed were Christiana's and Harry's lives. Both biographers ended their work with a summarizing chapter, offering their own view of the meanings of the relationship in the life of their particular subject.

Robinson and Douglas had somewhat different starting points and agendas and worked from somewhat different viewpoints on the material. Robinson, an American studies scholar with an interest in Melville, had a 10-year relationship with Murray in which he conducted more than 100 interviews with his subject. When he first approached Murray about doing a biography, Murray told him that "there was little to tell . . . except for a secret love affair of more than forty years." Robinson titled his biography *Love's Story Told*; his project was to portray the interplay between the private and public Murray, the lover and the scholar. Robinson wrote,

As the life gradually fell open, it became clear that the secret love affair was the key to it all. It everywhere energized and informed the public career; it was the hidden center, the focus, the source of inspiration and direction. . . . Love had revolutionized his life. (p. viii)

From this beginning in the energizing core of love, Robinson, by the end, moves to seeing the love relationship as essentially destructive and crippling, bordering on madness. "From the beginning, Harry and Christiana took to tragic models. . . . They knew they were in for trouble—indeed, they cultivated the trouble" (p. 383).

Douglas came to the project as a Jungian analyst, wishing to bring out of the shadows the woman who had had a powerful effect on Jung. She began with Christiana's contributions to Jung through her drawings and visions and notes the way in which women's creativity had for so long been appropriated by men who failed to nourish them in return. "She remains a footnote in other people's history" (p. 12), Douglas said of Christiana, who allowed her work to be unattributed, jumbled into Murray's.

Her lifelong struggle to find a way to put all her talents to use thrust her into a conflict between what she felt and what her culture, as well as Jung, told her she should be feeling. . . . The subtext of this biography concerns male and female relationships and what befalls a woman who strives to create a life of her own while remaining in thrall to the idea of Romantic love. (p. 15)

Douglas maintains this stance throughout the biography and, as her narrative proceeds, seems to grow increasingly angry at Harry for subduing, sub-

⁷In my opinion, both are superb works, and I would be unable to recommend one over the other.

verting, and abusing Christiana. Although she recognizes and details Christiana's life project to experience and document the new form for relationship she believed she and Harry were creating, Douglas concludes that the experiment was a failure. As her summary progresses, her criticism and outrage grow:

Their attempt at a creative relationship ended in a tragedy littered with corpses: Will Morgan, Jo Murray, other lovers, two abandoned children who suffered profoundly. . . . And finally, Harry, an honest and creative man with eleven aborted books, and Christiana, her visions veiled and un-lived, dead by drowning so Harry could try again with a younger, more rational, saltier woman. (p. 317)

So both conclude, in their own ways, the relationship to be a destructive misadventure even as it organized both lives. Both biographers, however, seemed to me to have taken on the project their subjects left unfinished (but with the pieces preserved), which was to try to find a social and narrative context for this relationship.

THE MEANINGS AND CONTEXT

No language is available to position this relationship in socially recognized terms, which was Harry and Christiana's struggle as well. They seemed to be reaching for a Jungian understanding of their experience, to interpret and present it in archetypal terms, subverting the usual categories of gender as they traded masculine and feminine clothing and roles; exploring the intersection between love and power, surrender and autonomy; stretching the limits of sexual experience by experimenting with the extremes of dominance and submission; and undergoing pain to understand its relationship to pleasure, all the while trying to find language for the intensities of feeling and aliveness that engulfed them.

If they thought of their union as a critique of the alienation of modern society and a restoration of spirituality and personal creativity, then it had larger meaning. But these are very rational terms for something that had at its core so much that was not rational. That was their whole aim—to explore the unconscious, which defies logic or linearity. Once, Harry complained to Christiana that if she lost faith in their project “then the Synergy is the greatest Love Affair of all time but it is *not* the salvation of man.” Their relationship might become nothing more than “closeness,” Harry worried (Robinson, p. 302). Thus, Harry tells us that even if we contemporary readers and psychologists were willing to view this as “the greatest love affair of all time,” he would think we had missed the point.

Robinson found Harry's most direct published references to his relationship with Christiana in his paper “Vicissitudes of Creativity.” There, Harry

tries to describe “two interdependent regions of imagination operating as a single system” that relies on sexuality and “exchanges of nourishing, gutty thoughts or feelings . . . [and] complete emotional expression” (Robinson, p. 354). Douglas quotes from an outline for the *Proposition* Harry wrote in 1949. In it, Harry described their relationship as unequalled “in the history of mankind” and “attributed the success of their relationship to its endurance, its intensity and its fecundity.” He described it as having no quarrels (ignoring its volatility). He used words such as “serene, stable and trustful” and said it fulfilled their basic needs including “succor, nurturance, religion, domination, submission, aggression and above all, erotic affection” (1993, p. 256). Harry stressed that they had “shared aims, tastes, values and sentiments” and that they “trusted the relationship” and expected it to endure throughout their lives. He saw as the chief causes for the strength of “their relationship their religious commitment to the union’s creativity; the trances; Jung’s example of his life with his wife and Toni Wolff”; their use of Jung’s “concept of animus and anima; their shared profession; their freedom from conventionality; their separation, which intensified their relationship and kept it fresh; Murray’s wealth, which permitted their isolation; building the Tower” and their apartment in the city; “and their ability to put their synergy first as their highest philosophy” (pp. 256–257). Christiana, in her effort in *What Joy!* to describe the relationship, stresses the “generative power of the unconscious” and the “pleasures of creativity of all kinds.” At the same time, Christiana rues their “limited literary powers” (Robinson, p. 330, quoting from *What Joy!*) that, in the end, she felt could not manage the task of languaging their experience.

Harry and Christiana believed that they had created something life-affirming and energizing, something to do with creativity and spirit, emotional and sexual freedom, something enlarging despite its travails and pain. But Douglas, having read through the mass of drafts and notes detailing their effort to contextualize their relationship, wrote that “when the chapters [focus] on the universal and messianic meaning of their life together, they elude or irritate the reader with their inflated pomposity” (p. 260). Harry and Christiana were struggling for a larger, public meaning—a name—for their experience, but what was it? And is there a context in which we as psychologists can understand it?

THE NARRATIVE CONTEXTS OF RELATIONSHIP

I now turn to consider the possible narrative contexts that underlie the biographers’ presentation of the relationship. Through these accounts one finds implicit narrative framings that alternate among the case history of pathology, the social critique, and more elusively, the intersubjective.

Pathology As a Narrative Context

Any relationship that exists outside of canonical forms invites pathologizing as a first response. In colloquial terms, people are quick to say (or think) “That’s sick” when hearing about surprising events in others’ relationships. In conceptual terms, psychoanalysis offers a range of possibilities for reducing adult relational experience to its infantile or irrational roots.

Both biographers are psychoanalytically informed and offer interpretations based in object relations theory. One can analyze this relationship from a psychoanalytically reductionistic point of view, noting, for example, the ways in which their sadomasochistic rituals allowed them each to live out and master early childhood traumas: Harry’s experience with his dominating mother and his helpless rage at the hands of his overstimulating and cruel sister; Christiana’s early punishments, locked in a dark closet, for being too rebellious. As they played at being master and slave, the repetition compulsion allowed them each to try to heal childhood wounds. Both biographers offer this and other such analysis. This form of analysis is reassuring for it grounds this story in the familiar idea that love provides an opportunity to relive and to better resolve the painful experiences of the past. But does this fully explain the nature of their experience in the relationship—the intense yearning and need, the fulfillment and vitality they found in one another, and the fact that it lasted 40 years? An analysis like this cannot account for the mystical, intense realms of experience that these people were trying to reach.

Douglas also ventures into the diagnostic:

Technically each had what psychologists once referred to as an “as-if” personality; this narcissistic personality disorder demanded that they pose as iconoclastic rebels in a grandiose drama of their own making. . . . Playing an anima figure or *femme inspiratrice* precluded true pairing, for the woman behind the figure disappears beneath the role, while the man who loves his reflection feels he has the right to the reflector as part of his own imaginative property. (p. 303)

This analysis of the pathology of the couple is either an astute insight or a reflection of Douglas’s anger at Harry for

resisting Christiana while demanding that she engulf him, defeating her while demanding that she create him, and forcing her to embody his ideal at the peril of losing him altogether. He became the admired man of the world while she grew more lonely and isolated. (p. 310)

Douglas even suggests that he abused her, physically as well as psychologically.

Because of her maternally-deprived and punitive childhood, Christiana needed an idealized conqueror who would punish and annihilate the needy female in his rituals of ecstasy and pain. Despotism, submission, aban-

donment, shame and release swirled unanalyzed in the adult woman's unconscious as they did, in different form, inside her male lover. (p. 310)

Robinson, for his part, offers psychological interpretations based on Harry's unconscious attraction to suffering women whom he felt compelled to try to heal. He is rather unsparing in his view of Christiana as depressed, neurotic, perhaps even mad. But this relationship had so many facets, as each biographer carefully details, that no one interpretation will encompass it.

Both Robinson and Douglas judged their subject to have been creatively unfulfilled, leaving most of their work undone. Each biographer believed that his or her subject somehow wanted the other to take charge of his or her own projects and got caught in cycles of hope and despair, supplication and blame. From this vantage point of unfulfilled promise, one can judge the relationship an impediment, a distraction, a self-destructive obsession based in neurotic conflict.

Another pathologizing strategy is to regard this whole relationship as illusion. If the relationship cannot be anchored in existing terms, it must have been only a form of imagination. In full pathologizing mode, Robinson wrote, "It was symptomatic of the frailty of her ecstatic dream that it required constant refabrication. . . . Little wonder that in shoring up her crumbling Xanadu she sometimes mistook the parched rush of anxiety for the real romantic thing" (p. 193). But all love emanates from the imagination (Person, 1988), and to describe its imaginative elements is not to explain or contextualize the experience. As Nussbaum (1990) points out, the problem is not an illusion on the lover's part—rather it is that the lovers' ways of seeing and valuing are not publicly communicable. The lover endows the other with value that the spectator often cannot find. The "pathology," then, may be in the spectator's blinders or too firm a conviction that one can know the "reality" of relationships. Robinson, however, analyzing, of course, from outside, attributes the "blindness" to them:

Had they fully recognized the extent to which the dyad rationalized and concealed separate, competing agendas—and thereby fostered endless crises in the name of endless love and made it possible to confuse great pain with great pleasure—they might have thought better of it. . . . They seem to have had a stake in blindness. (Robinson, 1992, p. 195)

Or one can simply dismiss what they were doing as delusion, which is how the psychobiographer Mac Runyan (Schultz, 2001) read Robinson's presentation. Douglas wrote that "their private world began to take on elements of a Romantic *folie-a-deux* pretend world . . . a shared, grandiose delusion" (p. 254). Robinson, coming out a bit from his biographer's stance (in what was my favorite line in both works), concluded, charmingly, "It was folly, of course. But, what a ride!" (p. 383). Perhaps it was folly, perhaps even "*folie*,"⁸ (in

⁸According to Harry's account, his analyst, Franz Alexander, regarded the couple as a "narcissism a deux" (Anderson, 1990, p. 320).

whose judgment?) but it was not just that. Christiana, almost as though she were in conversation with this point of view, once wrote that “vulgarity consists in not being able to distinguish between the *ardent* which is always outside the norm and the *sick* which is also outside the norm” (Douglas, 1993, p. 227).

Social Critique As a Narrative Context

Society provides the framework in which people assign significance to their emotional experience (Shapiro & Carr, 1991). Where there is protest against the prescribed forms found at hand in one’s social world, one can frame the relationship as social critique. This can be seen not in the language of pathology, but in the language of creative rebellion.

Christiana and Harry invented private rituals that united them in a way that pushed the limits of traditional rituals. They used ritual to enrich their life and to explore repressed wishes and desires. The two set out to confront what the superego abhorred—all the divine, dangerous, repressed, aggressive, sexual, perverse and/or ecstatically religious impulses that were forbidden in their upbringing. Ritual provided Christiana and Harry with a formalized context in which they could play with, yet try to contain and regulate, the backwaters of the human psyche that fascinated and repelled them or drew their obeisance. . . . Both had the courage to push their fantasies far enough and had imaginations large enough to risk experiencing the demonic side of their natures. (Douglas, 1993, p. 261)

And they had positive rituals as well. “They played at being animals or gods, had dramas they enacted, dances” (p. 263).⁹

Here, the context of play invokes Winnicottian ideas of the transitional space, the place of all creativity where the harsh demands of reality are temporarily set aside in order for something new to emerge. As Wona and Mansol (and they sometimes switched roles), the socially constructed Christiana and Harry could experiment with self-extension in the new, transitional space they were creating and discovering together. The “pretend” world, then, can be cast by the observer as folly (*folie*) or inventiveness, depending, I submit, on the dynamics of the observer. Wona–Mansol created a relationship separate from their outside identities. It was this relationship they were trying to name, articulate, understand, and locate in—and in opposition to—the social world.

Within this context, Harry and Christiana thought of themselves as offering to the world a new model for living; after all, they titled the treatise they were writing about their relationship the *Proposition*, indicating that

⁹Muller (1999) points out that without any structuring influence of the Third (the social context), dyads inevitably become prone to intense love–hate vacillations.

they saw themselves as proposing something. They carved on the Tower door the words "The standard of living is ecstasy." But, as Robinson points out, "the more they elaborated their system, the more intensely private it became" (p. 252). It was "a retreat from the world's poverty of spirit," rather than the healing model they wished to generate, and this, perhaps, was their greatest disappointment. But if we regard them from this vantage point, we construct them as failed visionaries or unheard prophets.

Neither biographer could narrate the story from this transitional space. Instead, they narrated from within their own prevailing social frameworks. Robinson, positioned in the social context of achievement, laments Harry's unrealized writing. Douglas, from a feminist stance, decries the normative roles for women that led Christiana to sacrifice her own agency in favor of self-sacrifice to a "doomed, romantic fantasy of relationship" (p. 316). Neither biographer could find a social good in whatever social critique the couple enacted.

Profoundly intimate relationships, because they are intimate, do not include the social world in their activities. Thus, the world has always attempted to regulate the forces of eros, recognizing its power to disrupt the social order by its sheer possibility of creating a private but unshared world (Person, 1988). Harry and Christiana, in their effort to write the *Proposition*, were attempting to define a context for their experiences with one another, to locate it in something beyond their own unconscious yearnings and needs, to provide it with a significance that could be shared by others. They knew what they opposed: In his essay "Vicissitudes of Creativity," Murray wrote that "complete emotional expression" between two members of a dyad was a corrective to "the traditional Christian practice of repression of primitive impulses" and to "the psychoanalytic notion of the replacement of the id by the ego (rationality), which results so often in a half-gelded, cautious, guarded, conformist, uncreative, and dogmatic way of coping with the world" (Robinson, 1992, p. 345).

Harry and Christiana found their feelings best represented, however implicitly, by Jung and Melville. They felt themselves enlarging on and embodying these ideas in their creation of their relationship, but the contexts were literary and psychological, not social. (Christiana was, for example, occupied about whether or not she was a good enough anima, a question not meaningful in the external social frame.) Feeling they had discovered the life force and held it between them, they wanted to add their creation to the lexicon of stories available in the world which, at the same time, they recognized, was unlikely to understand.

Without such a social context, the relationship cannot have a name. Languaging the relationship places it semiotically within the culture, which is something that Christiana and Harry themselves never found a way to do satisfactorily. The publisher's note to the Douglas book labels Christiana an "erotic muse"; the note to the Robinson book says that he had a "highly

erotic and mystical affair” with her; Edwin Schneidman (2001), who worked with Christiana at the Clinic, called her a “mystical companion” (p. 289) and Mac Runyan (1994) referred to her as a “soulmate” (p. 702). Alan Elms (1987), who wrote about Harry before his death, deftly called Christiana Harry’s closest professional collaborator and his “femme inspiratrice” (p. 11). These are perhaps acceptable names for what she may have been for him (overlooking what he was for her), but not for the nature of the relationship they created.¹⁰ Anderson (1999), who interviewed Murray at length, described them as having “an intimate emotional, intellectual and sexual relationship” (p. 24)—a good modernist definition (Gergen & Gergen, 1995), but one that eschews the Romantic in omitting the passionate and the erotic which, in its classical meaning (of or pertaining to the god of love, Eros), was central to Harry and Christiana.

Is Romanticism an escape into fantasy or a discovery of a more “real” underpinning of experience (Mitchell, 2002)? Harry and Christiana experienced their relationship within a Romantic frame but set themselves the task of translating their experience into terms that fit the modernist, Enlightenment intellectual tradition of their times. Thus, their struggle to understand their experience reflected a long-standing epistemological dialectic in their society which is, perhaps, another social context.

Intersubjectivity As a Narrative Context

Like all lovers, Christiana and Harry sought and experienced union, a felt restoration of a lost wholeness. But their intellectual and emotional interest in this union went beyond the sense of merger¹¹ and they attempted to explore the elements of what existed in this “between” that united them.

Because they prized creativity above all and because they felt that they were most creative in what they were evolving together, Harry and Christiana searched for some way of grounding their experience in something sharable outside their twosome. They believed that they “discovered” something in the same way that Melville “discovered” the unconscious and Jung “discovered” the archetypes. Douglas (1993), however, was impatient with this:

He and Christiana filled their private world with a multiplicity of signs and symbols, each of which took on a significance intelligible only to themselves. The depictions of their life together, at least in the rough drafts of their book, read like minutely detailed yet plotless illustrations of the arcane practices of a lost religion whose central tenets elude the outsider. Neither could allow their pillow talk simply to express the ten-

¹⁰Barenbaum (2006) elided the naming problem in writing about Murray by describing the two as having a “turbulent personal and professional relationship” (p. 173).

¹¹Person (1988) observed that the kind of merger experienced in passionate love, which expands the self as it loosens its boundaries, is completely different from the obliteration of the sense of self in psychosis, which leads to terror.

derness between two lovers . . . but forced it to assume the grandiose importance of a new language full of relevance and universal validity and equal to the great religious symbolism of the past. (p. 255)

The notion of religion, which invokes the spiritual foundation of the kind of relationship under consideration here, suggests a contextualizing link to experiences beyond and transcending the self. In psychoanalytic terms that are making their way into the mainstream of developmental psychology, the reference is to the intersubjective, to experiences that emerge in the “we” space between people. The language of individualism makes it difficult to describe or express processes of transitional space, transitional object, or projective identification, all names for contents and processes in the intersubjective space that spin and recombine elements of conscious and unconscious emotional experience in the players, belonging to both but to neither alone (see Josselson, in press). Passionate love is transformative because it offers access into another’s subjectivity, and theorists of love have suggested that its preservation depends on the sharing of aspects of self that emanate from the unconscious (Mitchell, 2002; Person, 1988).

Ogden (1994) had a profound effect on the understanding of the analytic relationship by detailing the *analytic third*, which represents the unconscious interplay of subjectivities in the analytic situation. Between two people, internal images and experiences mingle and are transformed and reinternalized in novel ways without any clearly identifiable sense of who has contributed which elements. The creation occurs in this “space between” and disappears if one tries to translate the experience into individualistic terms. In the analytic situation, the analysis itself provides the context for the experience.¹² In the course of life in an individualistic world, however, intersubjectivity goes either unnoticed or disavowed.

From this point of view, we might use two words that to some extent contextualize the intersubjective nature of this relationship. One word that Robinson (1992) borrows from Donne early in the text but then abandons is *interanimate*. This word seems to be a good description of what Christiana and Harry were doing for one another. They animated each other through the vitality of their union; Harry believed that they had surpassed Jung’s idea of individuation by finding a process within which two people could evolve together (Douglas, 1993). A second word is one that Harry used to mark their union: *synergy*. The dictionary defines *synergy* as the interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. What captured Harry and Christiana’s attention was the energy their relational project engendered.

¹²This idea, however, differs from Muller’s (1999) concept of the Third, which refers to the anchoring of a dyadic relationship in a context (Aron, 1999). Thus, one can conceptualize Christiana and Harry’s struggle as locating the intersubjective space in the external world.

From this interanimated, synergistic stance, I would argue with Douglas's and Robinson's conclusions that the Morgan–Murray relationship was a story of failed achievement. Murray has been lionized precisely because his (their) creation of the Harvard Psychological Clinic inspired and empowered a stellar group of scholars who, because of the sheer energy and excitement of the place, went on to influence the development of psychology in profound and lasting ways. This group became the grand theorists, the teachers, the generative center of the field. From where did this remarkable vitality emanate? Some want to attribute it to Murray, but it seems to me that these biographies make clear that the wellspring was in the relationship between these principals.¹³ Christiana created all the physical spaces that the Clinic occupied and attended to the spirit and rhythms of the working environment (according to Douglas, but not to Robinson), and she had a large part in planning the research agenda. In Bion's terms, they formed the pair that unconsciously for the group embodied hope and futurity. The very intensity and aspiration of that pairing may have powered the waves of intellectual passion in the Clinic that reached beyond into the next generations.¹⁴ Douglas alludes to this idea when she writes of the Clinic: "The atmosphere of excitement, even enchantment, and the almost erotic magnetism of the work itself was the outward manifestation of Murray's and Morgan's inner marriage" (p. 193). Robinson cites many noted psychologists commenting on Murray's zest, imagination, and creativity. But Murray himself repeatedly attributed this part of himself to Christiana, telling Jim Anderson that Christiana was part of every aspect of his thinking, his writing, and his speaking (Douglas, 1993, p. 297); she, for her part, saw him as empowering her capacity to have visions and to access the unconscious that led them both.

So how does one narrate a relationship that cannot be contained in available (individualistic) language but is emotionally central and life-structuring for two creative and reflective people and has its (unconscious) effects on others? Doing so would require a language of the intersubjective space, an emergent creation of the unconscious elements of two people. But it requires the difficult task of narrating the invisible because the space between, although feeling full and substantial to those within its boundaries, cannot be located (consciously) by those looking on.

¹³Most brief intellectual biographies of Murray simply edit Christiana Morgan out even though those who have looked carefully at the archives say that his notes for nearly all of his works until the time of her death include her writing interspersed with his (Douglas, 1993).

¹⁴Among those who worked in the Clinic and went on to make significant contributions to psychology were Erik Erikson, Robert White, Jerome Frank, Nevitt Sanford, Donald MacKinnon, and Fredrick Wyatt. Wyatt went on to create the Psychological Clinic at the University of Michigan, where I was among those he trained. I recognize in Robinson's (1992; and others') descriptions of the *esprit* at the Harvard Psychological Clinic the kind of intellectual passion I experienced at the Michigan Clinic (and have never encountered since), which suggests an energy there that could be carried to other places. In any case, I can trace my own intellectual inheritance to the Murray–Morgan alliance.

Passion, because it involves the quest for union in the context of arousal, cannot be conceived just as an aspect of self, although many have noted its role in catalyzing the self (Person, 1988; Viederman, 1988). It is an interanimating intersubjective interconnection that produces its own synergic field that radiates outward in ways we are not schooled to notice. It is easier and more apparent to trace the pain of passion—the inevitable separations, disjunctions, rages, and refusals—because at these moments the individuals reappear. It is in the periods of union, when the two-in-one flowers, that language fails.

Shared Meanings: Speaking in One Voice

Thinking in synergistic terms, however, goes deeply against the grain of intellectual tradition, which is rooted in individualism, and I offer the following example to illustrate this difficulty. In one remarkable contrast between the biographies, Douglas quotes a long document written by Harry as though from Christiana's point of view in which he details her effort to convert him away from his narrow conventionality to her vision and inner world, demanding of him that he be strong enough to overcome her power and force her to submit. In this telling of the history of their relationship, Harry, in Christiana's voice, portrays himself as a conventional, bourgeois, sexually inhibited, spiritually vacant person whom Christiana initiated into the mysteries of the mind and the soul. He credits her for leading him into psychology, for unveiling the realm of the unconscious and teaching him the joys of sexual expression. He recognizes that she had been impatient with his boyishness and intellectualization and documents how she patiently led him, step by step, to the core of experience. She broke down his "deadening rationality" and his "outmoded conscience." She helped him traverse the "vast distance in experience, in depth and sincerity of living" that separated them. Having chosen him, she needed to close the chasm between them or be alone with the anguish and terror of "carrying the life force unaided." She "had to bring him to a realization of the flesh" (Douglas, p. 272). This letter is, then, about as close to a concise psychological developmental summary in accessible language that they offered. Robinson, however, who also quotes extensively from this same document, presents it as though Christiana wrote it (p. 258; Douglas, p. 266). It is my own individualistic bias that wants to correct Robinson, to point out that, according to Douglas, Harry wrote it.

But, on further thought, I find this contradiction illuminating because in some sense the shared consciousness between them seems to be precisely what they were trying to convey through terms such as *synergy* and *two in one*. In synergistic relational thinking, one might say that this document emerged from their shared experience; authorship lies in the relationship. As Robinson said, "The truth is . . . mingled and elusive" (p. 261).

TOWARD A LANGUAGE OF RELATIONSHIP

We cannot narrate the space between in linear language and this fact, I think, leads us as psychologists to turn away from the kaleidoscopic nature, texture, and meanings of relationships in the lives of those we study. While watching the gymnastic dance company Pilobolus, a troupe that makes impossible kinetic sculptures out of the interconnections between human bodies, I had the insight that the pas de deux is the more apt metaphor for dyadic relationships than a linear verbal form. In the pas de deux are intertwining and interdependencies played off against separations, comings apart, and comings together in new configurations. Dancers are coiled around and cantilevered against one another in shifting shapes. Often, in the forms created by Pilobolus, it was not immediately apparent how the people were balanced against each other; who was holding who and how, if one dancer was doing the holding or allowing him- or herself to be held on to; or which parts of them were bearing the weight. The illusion was that a complex, new being emerged from the interweaving of bodies, a new creation from two making one. Indeed, they concretized Plato's mythical being of two heads, four legs, and four arms, embodying the various forms such a creature could take. Verbal language, though, is the language of self and we tend to describe relationships as being an additive result of two selves rather than a dynamic interconnection and interweaving of selves that meet and move apart and meet again.

We also narrate relationships within the implicit conventions of our culture that offer canonical templates for what relationships ought to be like. This limited range of narrative scripts becomes the horizon of understanding for psychology to interpret the meanings of relationships in people's lives. Because our language and knowledge of the self are so far beyond our language and "scientific" knowledge of relational experience (Josselson, 1992), much of what passes for analysis is conventionality cloaked in the language of psychopathology. We write from the conventions of how we think relationships ought to be, subtly—or not so subtly—critiquing what is outside these bounds. As Ethel Person (1988) points out, academic disciplines, allied with the rationalist tradition, regard love as a dangerous Romantic illusion, and, in allegiance to a modernist view of science, perpetuate a cultural split between feeling and knowing.¹⁵ Furthermore, she points out, contemporary therapists are schooled in a rationalist "commitment" kind of love, stripped of its excesses, based on mutual respect, shared values and common interests, and duty and responsibility rather than emotional pleasure and sexual passion.

The essence of intimate exchange is that it is private and usually beyond outside scrutiny. The documentation of the Murray–Morgan relation-

¹⁵Part of Harry and Christiana's quest was to be able to think and feel at the same time, a Jungian ideal.

ship is highly exceptional as a catalog of relational experience. A look inside what they found compelling and meaningful, beyond whatever anxieties such voyeurism may cause, offers a glimpse of a rarely seen but perhaps not uncommon experience of transcendence. As Nussbaum (1990) put it, "For the lovers, this life has the charms of mystery, secrecy and intimacy; from the outside it is simply mysterious" (p. 344).

Those we interview for our studies are similarly embedded in cultural conventions of language and concept and are often at pains to articulate the meanings of relationships in their lives, so the interview goes on to other, more easily discussed topics: ambitions, achievements, values, activities—those more public aspects of experience for which language is readily available. With both interviewee and researcher operating within such limits, the realm of relational experience becomes the underside or background or hidden arena of our depiction and understanding of human life, shrouded in silence, apparent only when disruptions, betrayals, disappointments, or losses make it manifest. Or it gets subsumed into notions of security and attachment. Relationship then comes to be constructed within a discourse of safety and satisfaction, predictability, and convention. We now have a better understanding of love when it supports a life, but not when it forms the structure of, or vitalizes, a life. Passionate love, in its erotic, life-creating sense, is accorded to the province of opera and literature.

Yet love is often the central organizing force in adult life. For Christiana and Harry (and for how many others?), it was the wellspring of their feeling of aliveness. "All real living is meeting," said Buber (1958, p. 25), although the distinction between adequate adjustment and "real living" has eluded much of psychological theory. Longitudinal studies and studies of mature adults show that when people look back on their lives, their relationships loom largest in terms of meaning and gratification (e.g., Holahan, 1994; Josselson, 2000). But these relationships are not given or found. What creates their meaning is the dynamic, developmental process people engage in as they try to work out what others will or will not be for them and the qualities of desire and responsiveness they can expect from—and offer to—others. Love, because it is a complex way of being with another person that evolves over time, requires a story that includes its denial and its yielding, its tensions, illusions, and excitement—and the special terms in which it is idiosyncratically cast. It can be grasped only in narrative form because only narrative can allow a view of subjectivity (and intersubjectivity). It may even require a polyphonic, multivocal narrative. From a postmodern point of view, in which the coconstruction of a world and a "we" can be understood apart from a preexisting order (Gergen & Gergen, 1995), the power of language can bring new things into being. What is needed is a language with which to narrate the intersubjective.

The challenge to narrative psychology is the same as that faced by Harry and Christiana and by most people, though for the latter perhaps in less dra-

matic and intense terms: how to narrate the eros of relational experience that structures and enlivens a life and may create an intersubjectivity that itself has effects in the world.

Life without love is load; and time stands still.

What we refuse to him, to death we give;

And then, then only, when we love, we live.

—Congreve

(Engraved over the Tower door; from Robinson, 1992, p. 324)

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