Introduction

Recognition, intersubjectivity and the Third

1.

This book develops the basic ideas of an intersubjective psycho-analysis organized around the idea of recognition. In contrast to the time when I first strove to formulate a theory of intersubjectivity—that wide-angle perspective that describes psychic processes and the growth of minds in terms of their reciprocally knowing interaction—it is now a dominant rather than marginal view in psychoanalysis (see Benjamin, 2016a). Intrapsychic theory, focused on the properties of one mind, has been modified and reoriented in light of the notion of intersubjectivity. We now think in terms of the interpenetration of minds, conscious and unconscious, even mirror neuron to mirror neuron. The implications of an intersubjective psychoanalysis have been revolutionary. They extend not only to clinical process, where the awareness of the analyst's participation and use of her own subjectivity has reorganized our practice, but more broadly to our entire view of human development and social bonds.

Whereas in my earlier work (especially Benjamin 1988; 1995a) I tried to articulate some of the concepts that would enable a turn to intersubjectivity—which was newly born and in formation—in this book I am reflecting on the consequences of a practice and theory elaborated subsequently by a broad group of psychoanalysts. Many but not all of them identified with "the relational turn" in North America. This book proposes a theoretical framework that illuminates those consequences, those that have emerged from the study of early development as well as relational practice. Centering on recognition, it aims to integrate thinking about mutuality and bi-directionality of relationships in both the analytic and developmental process of change.

Embracing the inspired contributions of thinkers representing a range of approaches to intersubjectivity I hope to illuminate the larger stakes of the contemporary psychoanalytic project: its unique way of thinking about self and other, mind and affect, the psychic life of social subjects. Consequently, I hope that these propositions will reach across the disciplinary barriers and enable non-psychoanalysts to access the social and philosophical implications of intersubjective psychoanalysis (see Benjamin, 2015). This intention is congruent with

my original interdisciplinary starting point in the critical theory of society—a social theory aimed at unmasking hidden pathologies of power and domination—as well as my current concern with the processes of social healing and witnessing of collective trauma (indeed, in light of current events, with non-violent resistance). As important as those concerns are however, there is no doubt that this book arises from, and gives primary attention to, my clinical experience as a psychoanalyst and my practical personal experiences as a mother. A mother, I should add, who studied mother-infant interaction and before that was passionately involved in the second wave generation of feminism, which sought to change the relations of mothering and working as well as psychoanalytic theory.

At the time that I was first developing my thinking about recognition in the 1970s, discovering the vital new field of studies in mother-infant interaction was electrifying. It seemed to offer confirmation of something I had looked in vain to find in the field of psychoanalysis itself—a demonstration of how we get into each other's minds, and indeed do this long before speech (Bullowa, 1979). Studies of mother-infant interaction provided concrete illlustrations of how recog-niton works in action as well as a new scaffolding for the idea of intersubjectivity (Trevarthen, 1977; 1979; Sander, 1983; Stern, 1985) previously considered phi-losophically (Habermas, 1972). It was now possible to develop a theoretical framework in which the action of recognition appeared as the basic element or building block of relationships; we could think in terms of relationships that transpire between two essentially similar minds that are nonetheless continually challenged, and often destabilized by each other's difference and disjunction.

A developmental micro-analytic approach to intersubjectivity begins with the embodied, emotional, rudimentary self interacting not with an abstract Other but another, more developed person. This interaction will necessarily include the infant's effect on her caretaker; it will be a two way street. Likewise, in the analytic process, we consider the reciprocal effect each partner has on the other's psyche, and as in development we study the interaction by which recognition process works. In philosophy the notion of a self constituted through reciprocal recognition postulates that the affirmation of independence depends on the expectation of mutual care or shared concerns (Honneth, 1995; 2007). Still, as with the notion of the self formed by a regulatory social order or through exclusion of the other (Butler, 1997; 2000), the significance and qualities of the other as an independent subject not defined by us may not receive their due (Benjamin,1998; Oliver, 2001). The matter of how we come to appreciate the other's separate existence, how we evolve through a relationship where each is the other's other seems to be the rightful concern of a psychoanalytic theorizing of intersubjectivity.

In starting with a *psychological* view of intersubjectivity, the self is seen developing in relation to an other (henceforth the "mother") who not only provides recognition, but is dependent on the self's agency and responsiveness to create a working pattern of co-created action. If intersubjective capacities are to be realized, the child must be involved in creating a mutually differentiating system, an exchange of recognition. Ideally, the mother will be recognized as part of a mutual

dynamic of reciprocal responsiveness and understanding. This system is the ianuguration of what I will be conceptualizing as the Third.

By starting with this psychoanalytically conceived intersubjectivity we may highlight the otherwise obscured reality: that the first other, woman as mother, was originally viewed through the patriarchal lens as a vehicle for the (male) self's development. The way in which the self is changed by having to struggle with the other's difference is, from a feminist perspective, necessarily part of a reciprocal process whereby the self is the other's other, the one who confronts the other with the need for accommodation and differentiation as well as the possibility of enlivening responsiveness. This is to say that the emphasis on mutual responsiveness and transformation as being psychologically vital tries to conceptualize the presence of two different minds mutually affecting each other regardless of their inequality or asymmetry—thereby leaving a potential space for equality and symmetry.

II.

Recognition as an organizing idea may be thought of in two ways: first, as a psychic position in which we know the other's mind as an equal source of intention and agency, affecting and being affected; and second as a process or action, the essence of responsiveness in interaction. The position of recognizing other minds was certainly not assumed in the original theorizing of psychoanalysis, which began with the intrapsychic topography and mechanisms of the individual mind. It has not gone unremarked in post-modern thought that positioning the analyst as the one who knows this topography and these mechanisms undid psychoanalysis's most radical discovery: the Unconscious as the limit upon the subject's claim to (self) knowledge (Laplanche, 1997; Rozmarin, 2007). However, the intersubjectivity of relational analysis throws doubt on more than the analyst's interpretive certainties or "keys to the kingdom"—the formulations viewed by earlier generations of classical analysts as unlocking the unconscious templates of neurosis. More radically, intersubjective theory throws the analyst into the non-linear system of two subjects, each presumed able to destabilize the other's self-certainty or be destabilized at any moment, so that meanings are emergent (Hoffman, 1998; Stern, 2009).

Thus, conceiving an intersubjective psychoanalysis meant positing the presence of two knowing and not-knowing subjects in the room—each one potentially engaged in recognition of the other's alterity, the other's different center of perspective, or perhaps equally unsettled and engaged in avoiding that recognition. Of key importance to my take on this is that such recognition involves an affectively meaningful experience of the other as not simply an object of need to be controlled or resisted, consumed or pushed away, but another mind we can connect with. Which is to say, experiencing the other as a responsive agent who can reciprocate that desire for recognition versus an object of need or drive to be managed within our own mental web. Crucially, these two psychic positions, corresponding

to intersubjective and intrapsychic theories, are best conceived not as exclusive but as interrelated phenomenologies of psychic life. Indeed the oscillations between them correspond to our shifts in relational states between feelings of self being *with* an other self and self being in complementary relation *to* an object (Benjamin, 1988).

Throughout this book I shall be referring to the position of "the Third." It is the position in which we implicitly recognize the other as a "like subject," a being we can experience as an "other mind." The Third refers to a position constituted through holding the tension of recognition between difference and sameness, taking the other to be a separate but equivalent center of initiative and consciousness with whom nonetheless feelings and intentions can be shared. Sharing begins in the earliest pre-verbal interactions: the creation of alignment in intentions or resonance of feeling, a degree of symmetry or sense of sameness even among unequal partners. But in the face of our inevitable incongruence such alignment can only be maintained paradoxically, by tolerating the inevitable interactive shifts from alignment to misalignment and back.

Breakdown of this basic recognition position is a common and pervasive phenomenon, however. The two sides of sameness and difference, congruence and incongruence, fail to be upheld by the crossbeam of the Third. This breakdown spells collapse into twoness, a relational formation in which the other appears as object or objectifying, unresponsive or injuring, threatening to erase one's own subjectivity or be oneself erased. This relational formation, based on splitting, takes shape as the complementarity of doer and done to, but there are many other permutuations: accuser and accused, helpless and coercive, even victim and perpetrator.

The second meaning of recognition pertains not to psychic position but to expressive behavior, to dynamic process, to responsiveness in action. Acts of recognition confirm that I am seen, known, my intentions have been understood, I have had an impact on you, and this must also mean that I matter to you; and reciprocally, that I see and know you, I understand your intentions, your actions affect me and you matter to me. Further, we share feelings, reflect each other's knowing, so we also have shared awareness. This is recognition. So far, I have found no other word that serves to sum up this whole congelation of meanings of how we impact and know one another, even though numerous other words can and have been used to describe facets of it. As the basic building block of connection and the primary form of linking between two persons, recognition is, consciously or unconsciously, going on all the time. As with breathing in and out, we may not stop to notice it unless the oxygen supply wanes and we start to look for a way out—or lose consciousness. Psychically, that way out is dissociation (Davies & Frawley, 1994; Bromberg, 1998; Howell, 2005). Of course, recognition is all about such noticing (or not); about the fact that we are wired to be sensitive and responsive to what the other is doing, to the other's response to our doing, to the way they "make me feel," the way I "make them feel," and whether I feel like they are doing something *to* me or *with* me, and vice versa.

And this matter of vice versa is a question for itself: whether we are reciprocating according to the same terms, struggling to find our terms, or mismatching on different terms; whether our mental gears are meshing or jamming. In short, the question is whether doing is *with* or *to*: doing *to* me implies that complementary twoness of opposing doer and done to, while doing *with* suggests that shared state of fitting in, coordination, or purposeful negotiation of difference that will be called thirdness. In light of infancy research, thirdness originally appears as a dynamic coordination, in which matching, mismatching, and return to matching of shared direction can be charted as a non-linear relation far from an exact mirroring or synchrony. It is not an action–reaction pattern. Though this process depends largely, but not wholly, on the attunement of the parental figure, such early interaction already reveals the importance of reciprocity in interaction.

In adapting these studies of earliest interaction to clinical theorizing I often use the image of a dance of two partners oriented to a shared but unscripted choreography as a metaphor for the Third. The shared expectation of a co-created dynamic pattern that both partners orient to could, of course, also apply to the overly tight coordination of doer and done to patterns of reactivity—the ones that reflect misattunement and failure to get it (Stern & Beebe, 1977), that lock us into reactivity. These observations allowed us to conceptualize the open-ended movement of co-created Thirds as distinct from such reactive patterns. Like the ideas of potential space in Winnicott (1971a) and the emergence of unforeseen or unbidden experience in Stern (2015), the idea of thirdness tries to capture the original idea of free association as an opening to the not yet known, what arises without coercion and constraint. Recognition in interaction is not a steady-state or stable condition but an ongoing process involving shifts in and out of thirdness.

I have stressed throughout my writing that the formulation of intersubjectivity and the capacity for recognition does not obviate the persistence of an intrapsychic life organized around complementarity, subject and object, and splitting as described by Klein in her notion of the paranoid-schizoid position. Of course this intrapsychic mental organization can become more dominant when recognition fails, but it is always part of our psychic make-up. What I have added, following Winnicott, is that the alternative goes beyond Klein's intrapsychic depressive position of holding opposites in tension (ambivalence). There is a position of intersubjective relating, the Third, in which the self reaches and feels reached by the real other predominates. The shifts between intrapsychic and intersubjective relating may be seen as ongoing, part of a continuing tension in the self. This formulation means that in theorizing recognition we must conceptualize not a static condition but a continual oscillation between relating to the outside other and the inner object (Winnicott, 1971a).

Intrapsychic relating to the object allows for the splitting that infuses the complementarity of doer and done to, in which the dominant form is coercion or submission, in which action and response are not freely given. Ironically, each person may feel coerced by the other, as if pushed into their assigned role, neither in control. Where then is goodness, where badness? The complementarity of victim

and victimizer, even when congealed in manifestly clear relations of domination, so often generates confusion. Invariably, doer–done to relations involve some dissociation of what is felt, experienced, known. As we have come to wider understanding of trauma in the form of non-recognition, dissociation has increasingly become part of our general understanding of the psyche. This widens our scope to how ongoing forms of doer–done to relations leave the self without access to thirdness and failure of recognition leaves parts of self in the closet.

Even when individuals have secure areas of intersubjective relating, the movement from felt awareness of the other as subject to dissociative relating to the object, from emotional contact to disconnection, are part of ordinary dyadic fluctuations. Such oscillations may be encompassed in the larger movement whereby we create the Third, as we learn to restore connections after minor or major disruptions. This larger movement is observable in the study of early interaction, where the process of disruption and repair between parent and infant helps form the ability to tolerate and integrate moments of disjunction and difference (Tronick, 1989). The process of restoring recognition that we observed in earliest interaction, the successful reorganization and recreation of attuned coordination after moments of mismatch or frustration could thus be translated into a larger principle: recognition depends on mutual correction, and the ongoing adjustment or repair of disruption becomes the platform of thirdness.

Relational repair (as opposed to the self's internal repair of the object's goodness) involves the caregiver acknowledging—in deeds and communicative gestures—the violations of expected patterns of soothing or responsiveness. This process of repair serves to create a sense of the *lawful world*, a central category of experience. In the lawful world, the other's behavior is not simply always predictable but more importantly confirms when the unexpected or painful wrongness occurs as well as the need to put things right. And what cannot be put right, yet another violation of expectancy, is also acknowledged. The mental representation of lawful world refers not to juridical law, but to a belief in the value and possibility of intelligible, responsive and respectful behavior as a condition of mental sanity and interpersonal/social bonds; it is associated with differentiated respect for the person of the other. This idea of *acknowledgment* and how it creates the sense of the lawful world will be threaded throughout these essays.

This idea has assumed even greater importance for me since the election of 2016 and the inauguration of Trump has been taking place as I write this introduction. We have seen how the manipulation of political processes by an individual who deliberately, violently transgresses against the lawful world—with its attendant respect for all persons—has led to a collective reaction to a psychically traumatic social violation. The sentiments of shock, fear and grief expressed in our consulting rooms as well as in public reflect the experience of loss of the lawful world.

In this light the idea I have developed in my chapter on collective trauma and witnessing may be especially relevant, the idea that associated with the doer–done to complementarity is a powerful fantasy, "Only one can live." It informs both the individual and collective mind, organizing what Freud saw as Oedipal competition

into a life and death struggle—Cain and Abel comes to mind—in which only one can survive. While everyone may be subject to this fantasy at times of fear and stress, when the social Third breaks down, or when certain groups organize around this fantasy, it becomes a dominant structure, there appears to be no exit from the stark alternatives of kill or be killed, annihilated or harming. Resisting this fantasy requires some version of the Third, a vision of a lawful world in which self and other, Them and Us, can be recognized.

III.

I believe that in formal terms the same process of acknowledgment is crucial in social and clinical dimensions of interaction. The process evolves through early experience with accommodation, attunement, understanding into later more complex forms. The demand to cope with disruptions and difference, face the consequences of failures of recognition for self and other, accommodate even as one is being accommodated to—all these should appear in statu nascendi, in early relational repair in infancy and early childhood. In the chapters that follow I will show how clinical psychoanalysis has given us a unique perspective on relational repair and trace the vicissitudes of intersubjective breakdowns and healing through acknowledgment.

Central to my formulation of recognition theory, the idea of acknowledgment is exemplified in psychoanalytic practice where its function is to restore the space of thirdness. What characterizes this space is the sense that each partner can feel and think independently without feeling the push-pull of complementarity. This process, more complex than it might first appear, has been well articulated by North American relational analysts who have explored how analysts may make rooms for their own tendencies to dissociation, their feelings of shame or badness, and in that sense, their lack of mastery and control. That lack of knowingness is associated with a theorizing of dissociation (Stern, 1997) and the awareness of mutual interpersonal vulnerability that infuses the analytic relationship, even when not consciously formulated or spoken of (Aron, 1996). The emphasis on our own propensities for dissociating in tandem with or separately from our patients has changed our work (Bromberg, 2006; 2011). Realizing that the analyst's vulnerability can be expressed in the very need to be the healer, we are poised to accept the fallacy of positing the Third as an ideal state of relatedness that can be sustained (Benjamin, 2000a; 2000b). It becomes ever clearer how analysts are charged with negotiating the tension between withdrawal into self-protection and acknowledging the presence of dissociated feelings of pain and shame by recognizing the other's intentions, or by reaching shared understanding. The difficulty is that dissociation within both patient and analyst (or both together), the unconscious movement between different self-states, can often only be recognized in hindsight.

From this vantage point, I discuss the analytic process of repairing the Third, which works both by restoring rhythmicity or recognition as well as by working

with the collisions that result from the complementary impasses of doer and done to. The relational discourse on enactments or collisions, the analysis of repetition and repair of the simulated past injuries, has mushroomed—even as it remains relatively unknown to much of the more traditional psychoanalytic world, despite relational efforts to integrate and mediate different positions (see Cooper, 2010). In the clinical discussions, I will consider how we engage relational repair, how we both formulate and show procedurally our awareness of how each of our minds work and re-create a sense of a lawful world. In light of the intensified focus on trauma and its enactment in the analytic situation I will consider the tension between the experience of mutual vulnerability and the analyst's asymmetrical stance of witnessing and acknowledging the suffering a patient has endured. Further, how this acknowledgment is complicated by the inevitable dissociation as well as the unconscious circuity and symbolic scrambling with which the past manifests in the present.

The project undertaken in these essays was to formulate these issues—some of which appear rather differently in different psychoanalytic cultures—in a conceptual framework of recognition and thirdness that spans the arc from infant development to the analytic dyad to social and collective trauma. The breadth of this framework corresponds to the idea of recognition as a multi-faceted concept; hence it articulates different facets of thirdness in relation to a variety of intersubjective relations, different registers of the Third position as they appear developmentally, clinically and socially. I have attempted to elaborate the Third as a position that itself develops, from the very basic interactive patterns—rhythmicity—into more complex, symbolically mediated forms of shared reflection, dialogue and negotiation of difference. Hence, we experience the Third as both rhythmic and differentiating, each aspect enhancing the other, even though one may be foregrounded at a given moment. The Third has its developmental trajectory toward greater complexity and differentiation in which it is important not to privilege any one moment.

IV.

Given this broad framework, I can now imagine my reader wondering: "How is this theory of recognition related to other theories of knowing minds?" One might wonder about the relationship of recognition theory to the widely used ideas regarding mentalization and affect regulation (Siegel, 1999; Fonagy et al., 2002; Schore, 2003; 2011; Hill, 2015). Affect regulation theory, as developed by Schore and Siegel, stresses the implicit communication between our right brains that organizes mental states and directly influences our level of physiological arousal, while mentalization theory, formulated by Fonagy and Target (1996 a & b; Fonagy et al., 2002) stresses the reflective aspect of understanding and being understood by others' minds, enabling the distinction between inner and outer reality. Together these theories show how the complex and vital process of mental development is mediated in infancy and early childhood: the specific consequences of being

soothed and understood, having pain and joy reflected back, in ways that stabilize the child's affect state and create symbolic capacities.

As I see it, the adult action of reflecting back feeling—showing that I get what you are experiencing, which now therefore becomes a communication to me—constitutes the basic 1.0 version of recognition. Initially, then, recognition makes action into communication, and this action on both sides is required for the child to be coherent, regulated, to have defined emotions as well as agency, as well as to later think about what is in the mind of the other and her own mind. In my conceptualization, affect regulation and mentalization are effects of the caregiver's recognizing action on the growth of the mind, and conversely build the capacity to act in this way with others.

But what if such recognition, such intersubjective relatedness, were to be seen as an end in itself? By focusing on what we must be able to do to regulate affect or evolve mentalization, we are still concerned with cultivating the mind. One might still want to ask to what end? Daniel Stern, whose contributions spanned early infancy studies and later a general theory of mind, formulated the process of recognition in terms of the need for intersubjective orientation and relatedness, which are necessary for their own sake. Knowing and being known from the "inside" can also be seen as an essential motivation separate from the basic need for attachment, which is associated with safety (Stern, 2004). I am inclined to add that although the safety of being held and nourished is distinct from the inter-subjective relatedness of knowing other minds, when those needs are split the self also tends to be split between security and recognition. In some instances parts of self must be dissociated, unrecognized, in order to be safe; in others, safety is sacrificed in order to feel known. And this leads to an important point: a person may develop the capacities for mentalization and self-regulation even while organizing the self in terms of such splits. The full experience of knowing and being known while trusting in the lawful world, such as we aim for in psycho-analysis, requires overcoming these splits.

If we accept this way of thinking about recognition as a motivating need—a need that "drives" the psyche (to use an outmoded phrase) since without it we are alone and unsafe—then we may end up not far from Freud's (1930) original powerful insight that the child renounces parts of his psyche to stay connected to the parent (authority figure), to keep mother or father's love. Recognition of one part is renounced to attain safe inhabiting of another. The alienation of self from its own needs through splitting and dissociation follows upon the denial of recognition; these alienating forms aim to get around the withholding of the needed caregiver attention, that which alone stabilizes the psyche. If too much of what a child initiates is rejected and refused, rather than recognized and responded to, the ability to respond to other minds will be impaired as vital parts of self have been dissociated: e.g. experiences of excitement, pain, fear have become disavowed, "Not-me" in Sullivan's term (1953). This, in short, is the phenomenology of our psychic life as it evolved in the history of psychoanalytic theorizing of object relations. In this way an important bridge was built between

early mental development and clinical experience, and as it turns out, social relations in general.

Simply, we may say that object relations theory assumed, but did not formulate, a tacit phenomenology of recognition. It described internal relations that could only develop on the basis of a broad spectrum of interactive experience whereby one's feelings and actions are affirmed or disconfirmed. Once we shift to an intersubjective perspective, however, the intent of those actions (as we see when they are affirmed, not alienated) appears to be that of sharing what we each reciprocally apprehend about the other's mind or feeling. Recognition as affirmative response to the other may proceed along diverse avenues we shall explore later: matching the other's intentions and rhythms, empathizing with and understanding their narratives and dilemmas, witnessing their suffering and injury, acknowledging to them one's own vulnerability or wrongdoing, identifying with them in one's own mind, granting the other's dignity and common humanity, validating the rightful order of things, making space for difference and otherness.

The essential point on which recognition theory focuses is the reciprocal response to each other's minds, regardless of its specific form—the awareness of the other as subject rather than object. And this connectedness to the other as a being with an equivalent center of initiative and feeling, as expressed by Buber's (1923) terminology of I and Thou as opposed to I and It, may be its own end, a need unto itself, because without it the self cannot actually feel its full "I-ness." In this sense it is an indispensable basis for our having any good sort of life or mind at all, both condition of being and end in itself. Recognition defies the distinction between ends and means.

Recognition theory is an effort to weave together insights held by many quite different thinkers regarding the need to know and be known by other minds. As Hegel first posited, it is in this way that the conscious self comes to truly live its sense of selfhood. The need to feel one exists "inside" the other's mind is a primary psychoanalytic metaphor, through which Bion expressed from a somewhat different angle, the desire for being known. The idea of mutual recognition as the basis for intersubjectivity exceeds the concept of mutual influence, which describes a process observed from the outside and points towards the experience inside: the appreciation of being mutually affected, the shared realization of impact, "Zing, what you do to me." This powerful motivation to share experience not only for safety or some other end's sake becomes an experience of desire, something the subject "owns" as hers. It begins the moment the toddler says "I Want that" and seeks recognition through the other's desire. Desire makes us a subject, and the essential desire is to be met by the other's desire.

The distinct meaning of this desire for mutual recognition might be clarified if I express this idea from the perspective of the caregiving mother rather than the child, whose development and affect regulation she supports. The mother, as I shall argue, is ideally motivated by desire as well as her child's need. Given some measure of reciprocal responsiveness, you love what you do for the other as much as you love what the other does for you. Your love establishes the other's sub-

jective existence for you as well as your own. Then again, as a lover, your acts form part of a circuit of desire, the Third of love, through which it arises. I would contend that the patient comes to analysis to find her *own* love as much as to be or feel loved: to be "*in* love"—in its thirdness. Important is, as McKay (2016) has formulated, that the felt experience of mutual recognition supplies not only the bread of being understood but the roses of "us two" discovering something together, being present for and aware of knowing each other.

V.

From the beginning, the idea of mutual recognition generated controversy in the world of psychoanalysis; it became the flashpoint of a long debate. First presented developmentally, its translation into the clinical field required much work (see especially Aron, 1996). Did it mean that the analyst's subjectivity should be revealed to the patient, or that it is known implicitly whether revealed or not (Hoffman, 1983; 1998; Aron, 1996)? Or did it refer to our already integrated notions of the analyst's ("counter transference") identifications (see Gerhardt et al., 2000)? How should or do we think about mutual identification, the unconscious ways in which our minds come to mirror one another, the way our projective processes become entangled and interact? And how could the relationship between mothers and infants be seen as mutual when it is so asymmetrical; indeed, can it rightfully be said that the infant's reciprocal responsiveness means that the relationship contains mutual recognition?

I will present my view of what is at stake in this debate, but let me first interpose a preliminary move—perhaps this term, mutuality, needs to be deconstructed. That is, the binary of mutuality with its opposite, usually taken to be asymmetry, needs to be broken down or "sublated" (transcended but preserved in new form). In making a case for mutuality, I will be following Aron (1996) and elaborate how its notion is enlarged (not diminished) by the opposing term of asymmetry. That is, I will show how we can arrive at a third position that holds the opposites in tension. The beginning of reciprocity in the mother and infant relationship, with its huge disparity in capacities, already illustrates the dialectic of mutuality and asymmetry.

The idea is that even unequally matched partners can yet be reciprocating, share mutual understanding or feeling based on the intentionality of recognition—procedurally, pre-verbally as well as symbolically. Let me illustrate this point about asymmetrical interactions by previewing a central thread of this book, the giving and receiving of acknowledgment. If, for instance, I (in my capacity as analyst) offer an acknowledgment of some failure of responsiveness or of some violation of the other's rightful expectation, this giving and receiving depends upon a mutual understanding of what is intended; further, the healing action depends upon a reciprocal appreciation by the other of what I offer. Without that appreciation, the other is not genuinely feeling, sharing and integrating the acknowledgment. So acknowledgment, though unidirectional, becomes an opportunity for generating mutual recognition between different subjects, felt as such.

In this way acknowledgment and recognition may be formulated as distinct and mutually supporting actions. Or, we could say that the acknowledgment becomes an instantiation of recognition that relies on a deep reciprocal knowing what the other is about. While this principle is observable in psychoanalytic practice, it may well hold good in other relations: a child with a parent, an injured party with the one responsible for witnessing, if not for having injured. To generalize, there needs to be reciprocal affirmation of the action through which one person's experience is validated and known. That is the meta-level of the communication, which is represented as "This other person is reaching toward me, receiving my message, making it right with me—even, holding my pain in her heart." When agreement or resonance is achieved by acknowledging some failure of understanding or attunement it simultaneously halts the toggling back and forth of projection, the complementary doer–done to relation. For instance, in witnessing, This other mind now resonates with the vibration of my pain: we are together in the rhythmicity of the Third (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2013).

VI.

The argument for finding oneself by going out into the not-self and returning to a now different and altered self (marked by the alterity it has encountered) points toward the underlying movement of intersubjectivity. To realize this transformation not primarily as loss but rather as enrichment of self requires the movement between self and not-self that mirrors the more universal movement between oneness and thirdness. The other, the not-self, is the one we need in order to realize this movement. Developmentally, we need the other to share our state in order to contain and so experience excitement, joy, arousal and not merely relief from suffering. To heal psychologically, we need the other's witnessing and empathy, but also to create conditions for mutual sharing of positive affect so as to inflect even the witnessing of suffering with the opening into mutual transformation. It is necessary to encounter in the other some specific version of that same desire for self-affirmation through knowing and being known. Mutuality is necessary insofar as the self needs to give as much as it needs to receive.

Growing up and living in an acquisitive, instrumental culture, dominated by fantasies of material wealth and fears of loss, the very idea of giving to the other, surrendering to the thirdness of mutuality, is easily translated into submission and self-loss. Even psychoanalysts are prone to imagining that their patients only need be given recognition, empathy and understanding, of which they were doubtless deprived, and to miss the strength that comes from giving, being a reciprocally responsive other who can go out into the other's mind and return enriched, able to formulate their own understanding. Now more than ever, when we are poised to witness the avalanche of greed, fear, and authoritarianism in the seat of the American government, it seems to me important to realize the power generated by the position of being able to give recognition, to respond and bear witness. Regardless of whether one occupies the position of demanding or giving recog-

nition, as we realize the interdependence of these moves we realize both sides serve to uphold universal claims for dignity, are needed to protect those who are denied dignity.

I do not therefore accept the splitting that detaches the healing of wounds or empathy for suffering from the opportunity to be recognized in expressing desire. This reciprocal interaction, jointly experienced, creates a shared Third that transforms both giver and receiver. For this reason I will contend that the mutuality of shared transformation is at the core of psychoanalysis and is fundamental to our interaction.

Thinking in these terms of the reciprocal affirmation of intent by different partners might clear the confusion generated by a common misunderstanding of recognition: misconstruing the idea of recognizing the other's subjectivity to mean that the patient "must" recognize the analyst's personal expressions of subjectivity (Orange, 2010; see Benjamin, response, 2010; see Gerhardt et al., 2000; Benjamin 2000b). As I will discuss (Chapter 3), in psychoanalytic theory recognition pertains to what makes someone's independent subjectivity qua other mind apparent. For example, the analyst's empathic acknowledgment of the patient's unique suffering becomes an opportunity for the patient's recognition that the analyst is not identical with his (feared) mental object who has failed to empathize.

The analyst who can persevere as the patient presents the part of himself that does not feel able to take in recognition or nourishment, contains the painful disbelief in her understanding, her goodness, her intention to heal. She thereby "survives destruction" in Winnicott's (1971a) famous phrase, meaning the analyst is recognized as a separate subject, an outside other. When the analyst or the mother seems to grasp the intention behind repudiating feelings or negating fantasies ("I don't need you") without retaliating or collapsing, she distinguishes herself from the manifestation of the patient's or child's fearful projections. The analyst shows she is feeling the impact and receiving the communication, without falling into the reactivity of the complementary position (or at least not staying in it). The analyst is thus distinguished from the intrapsychic object and the patient is able to separate from his fantasy of being too powerful and destructive. In this way the distinction between the intrapsychic and intersubjective reality is highlighted.

This all-important distinction, in Winnicott's terms (1971a), in which the contrast between the equally essential modes of intrapsychic and intersubjective (inner fantasy and shared external reality) is established, restores the third position in the relationship. Both partners might now share the space of thirdness based on two differentiated subjects facing each other, one of whom is trying to be responsible for much of what goes on between them. This process is the primary meaning of recognizing the analyst (other or mother) as subject.

This paradigm of recognition and destruction, inaugurated by Winnicott, became the essential platform for the more general social-philosophical point of my understanding of recognition, which differentiates it from many other thinkers (Benjamin, 1988; 1990/95). It demonstrates that liberation comes not only through *being* recognized but also *doing* the recognizing. In psychoanalytic terms, to recognize

the other as an independent source of confirmation and be freed from frightening or aggressive projections—which ultimately cause one to feel monstrous, damaging or damaged—is essential to emotional liberation. This freedom involves a shift for both analyst and patient into a mutually created Third, which entails a simultaneity of recognition and acknowledgment.

Acknowledgment means that the self can own rather than dissociate—project into the not-me what it needs to contain as part-of-me—its own vulnerability or harming. Now, it can recognize the other as a separate self rather than turning her into a container for the not-me. Winnicott proposed that it is this freedom that makes room for the possibility of loving the other who has stayed present to receive the communication; you are outside, you survived, now you can be loved. *That is an enduring idea that to me seems eternally new and freshly revealed.*

VII.

What amazed me when I first discovered this argument for recognizing the other, instead of merely seeking recognition for the self, was the way it resonated with the problem of recognition as set forth by Hegel. Since Hegel's original dialectical formulation continues to underpin my version of recognition theory, it seems worth recapitulating the connection. While this philosophically central discussion of recognizing the other has been less accessible and integrated in psychoanalytic theory than in philosophy, it seems to me essentially connected to the recent psychoanalytic discussions of trauma and the Other in recent literature (see Grand & Salberg, 2017). Without it, the laudable expansion of psychoanalytic attention to gender, race, and class lacks a theoretical scaffold and may devolve into placeholding. Recognition theory, as I have formulated it, is meant to offer one possible scaffold. In addition, its deconstruction of authority relations (knowing subject, known object) is of equally crucial importance for the psychoanalytic relationship (Benjamin, 1997).

As I explained in *The Bonds of Love* (1988), Winnicott's (1971a) idea of liberation from the bind of non-recognition—the inability of the omnipotent mind to contact an outside other—shed further light on the philosophical parable of the master-slave relation as put forth by Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807; see O'Neill, 1996). Or conversely, we might say that Hegel had, well before Freud's theorizing of narcissism, described the self that is trapped in omnipotence —a self without reflection by the other, lacking exactly that intersubjective relatedness without which we are psychically alone.

Hegel's analysis of dependence and independence of the Self (self-consciousness as he referred to it) could be imbricated with the psychoanalytic description of the ego that does not want to recognize the outside world, is afflicted by helplessness and dependency on those who would shape it according to their dictates. This is a text with an endless number of readings, but as I have come to think about it, Hegel at first demonstrates logically how the desire to be recognized would drive the need for mutuality, would *require* the reciprocal action of

each self-aware consciousness reflecting back the other. Since the self cannot be adequately reflected back by an object, it must find another equal self to do this, meaning, a self which it can recognize in return. In effect, it must perforce recognize the other as a like subject. However, as we find in the psychoanalytic relationship, this condition is circular, as it would imply that we have *already* experienced an other who neither retaliates nor collapses.

As to Hegel, he simply states that the tension according to which each Self must give the Other recognition breaks down, and the two terms—recognizing and being recognized—are split apart. This splitting, were it not logically determined by the dialectical movement of breaking apart and reassembling in new form, would in any case appear to reflect historical truth. One Self (henceforth master) receives the recognition while the other Self (henceforth servant or slave) gives it. While there have been numerous interpretations of why Hegel thinks this must happen, we may reduce it to two essential and interconnected conditions. First, the Self finds it intolerable to bear the vulnerability of being dependent on an other subject whom he does not control, indeed who is independent and can demand the same recognition as the Self. Second, the Self is trying to master and deny the vulnerability of its organic bodily existence. If one wishes to escape dependency on the other, one must face death, that is, stake one's life and deny fear, overriding the vulnerability of the flesh. Alternatively, if one tries to escape death, one accepts the truth of one's vulnerability in exchange for enduring the servitude of dependency. So, the first choice becomes the way of the master, the second the way of bondage (slave/servant).

As I proposed in *The Bonds of Love*, following Kojeve's (1969) famous interpretation, this parable of master and slave is relevant for the intersubjective framing of psychoanalytic theory. In Freud's ego-object paradigm, the subject would be seen as the ego who strives to master the object, would ultimately renounce need for the maternal object in order to separate itself from early helplessness and dependency, that is, to become like father. As a critical analysis of the Oedipus complex reveals, mastery and independence based on repudiating passivity produces the male subject as a position of reversal: the woman/mother who was powerful and needed when one was an infant is now reduced to a devalued or denigrated maternal object. In this way, the male subject circumvents facing her as an other, as an equivalent subject. He denies dependency on the other whom he subjugates.

With this version of oedipal theory in mind, I proposed that we read the Hegelian paradigm as a commentary upon the vicious circle of gender that anchored patriarchal domination. A real break with this paradigm of domination would then require a conception of development as an intersubjective process in which differentiation is not primarily a result of repressing the love relation; but also, would not require oedipal socialization into the heterosexual complementarity of male subject, female object. An intersubjective theory of differentiation might rather take as starting point the Winnicottian move that postulates survival of the object/other as a condition of the mother's transformation into subject. Such a

move would be conditional on the original male subject taking back the projection of his own helplessness and vulnerability, accepting his own relation to "nature." This means acknowledging his commonality with the maternal body that stands for mortality as well as his dependence for life on that embodied subject (Dinnerstein, 1976).

But this is only one moment of the necessary movement. The other, equally important, moment is that the one who was formerly the female object (oppressed, property), resists being consumed and reduced, asserting her separate existence; to risk her own death without taking life, without violence and reversal of the complementarity, reaching for the Third. This would be the difference the other can make. We can, I believe, adapt this paradigm of change for racial enslavement. As the complex struggle for liberation from these complementary doer–done to positions evolves, it becomes apparent how necessary it is to think in terms of a Third. This Third then can transcend reversal: not the slave denying her own vulnerability but confronting the master with his, thereby asserting mutual vulnerability and need for recognition without denying dependency.

Why is that obvious proposal not so obvious? Why is the propensity to maintain splitting in reverse so common, the obvious deconstruction of binaries so difficult? For victims to avoid the fate of power reversal, in which they re-enact the traumatizing violence they have been subject to (if only by hurting themselves), they, too, must renounce the projection of their helplessness into the other. But the internalization of the master as the image of freedom or the ideal of Power is not so readily expunged; to whom should we then address the unconscious demand for recognition and identification (see Fanon, 1967)? And how meaningful is a demand for racial or national liberation that maintains female subjugation?

In the political arena, the social demand for recognition that absorbed the master's model of denial and projection of shameful vulnerability and powerlessness—forcing those unwanted parts into the image of the degraded or subjugated Other—has often led to tragic reversals of complementarity where victims mimic former abusers. To grasp how unconscious idealization and envy of the master's permission to transgress led to victims becoming perpetrator, we must venture into the tangled vicissitudes of the doer–done to complementarity. It may sound easy in theory but in practices these states of aspiring to power and exposure to vulnerability are dissociated, the terror and shame of openly baring the weak self or harming self are so great. Keeping these states unlinked and behind the veil protects us all from pain and confusion.

In the analytic setting, working with such reversals of shame and vulnerability that are the legacy of trauma and non-recognition, of injuries not modified by the opportunity for intersubjective repair, has been our great challenge. Feeling oneself thrust in the role of seeming abuser, feeling unable to extricate oneself from being victimizer or victim, can be extremely painful for the analyst. However, analysts have also the opportunity to learn a great deal about the repetitions of the doer and done to relation, since developing intersubjective theory and making the relational turn. Intersubjective relations of acknowledgment and repair counter

the intrapsychic realm of splitting and so enable us to step out of the relations of doer and done to. The point of this book is to make that learning available for both clinical and social use.

VIII.

The challenge to a psychologically oriented recognition theory was articulated by Butler (1997). Her starting point is, following Foucault, a social self whose dependency for recognition always already places it in a submissive relation to an alienating, subjugating regulatory system (see Butler, 1997). Lacking a notion of a psychological self with some inherent tendencies, it might seem that the social self could submit and sacrifice to maintain belonging without soul and body rebelling. But precisely this rebellion—in the form of hysterics' bodily resistance to the pain of self-denial in the patriarchal order—gave birth to psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis insisted that parts of self that were denied would demand some expression, perhaps equally painful; that the process of splitting off desire for the other, the basic needs for safety and agency, always has violent repercussions. The psychoanalytic project always did and still does imply the possibility of alternative relations that articulate and transform the conflict between belonging (socially recognized identity) and recognition of desire. While Butler appears to suggest that dependency necessarily entails subjugation, Allen (2008) argues that while human beings "so crave recognition that we take whatever kind . . . we can get, even . . . capitulating to our own subordination," it does not follow that other possibilities, such as mutual recognition, do not exist (p. 84). What is important, Allen suggests, is that we see recognition as a temporal process involving break-down and restoration of tension between recognition and destruction. The temporal perspective is vital for a psychoanalytic view because in so many instances we are driven to circle back, repeat past failures in new forms, but in this way we are also opening up possibilities for repair.

Whereas those oppressive identities that offer the appearance of recognition at the price of feeling real suck us into the zone of rigid complementarities,[1] resistance and critique of those constrictions inform the successful struggles for recognition— of difference, queerness, multiplicity. These struggles have cleared considerable

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1   The implications of intersubjectivity in relation to social identity or groups claiming redress for their identity are more problematic than conventional political discourse often admits, since Identity can be a form of alienating recognition even as the subject seeks to use it to secure a sense of self and belonging. In the political arena the appeals to national identity may be linked to the adulation and submission to the leader cum ego ideal elucidated by Freud (1921) as mass psychology, ideas further elaborated by post-Freudians (Adorno, 1956; Marcuse, 1962). I began (Benjamin, 1988; 1998) by trying to grasp the psychoanalytic social psychology of non-recognition, both its effects—the alienation of our powers and desires—and its origins in psychic development as interwoven with the sexual organization of social life, culminating in my intervention in the feminist debate around the nature of the subject (*Shadow of the Other*, 1988).

space for alternative social attachments in which known identities can be deconstructed and their components used as building materials for the self. Identifications that function as submission in one register, can be reconfigured in the intersubjective register of thirdness. As we shall see, the ability to play implies a relationship to difference that supersedes undifferentiated psychological relations of coercion. To be able to "stand in the spaces" as Bromberg (1998) put it, to disidentify with any one voice as "I," in Rivera's (1989) terms, depends on intersubjective relations that validate that multiplicity. The aim of maintaining social solidarity while tolerating the tension of conflicting identifications parallels the psychoanalytic process of allowing multiple self-states to exist without one negating the other. Understood in this way, recognition and appreciation for the other, or the other within, overcomes the act of appropriation; identification with the different other serves as a form of empathy that actually destabilizes the subjugating forms of social dependency that constrict what counts as intelligible, human, worthy.

This emphasis on psychological difference and multiplicity[2] points us toward the crucial distinction between recognition theory rooted in a psychoanalytic perspective and one that derives from the sphere of the political. Questioning the common understanding of offering political recognition to the other as affirmation of social identity, Oliver (2001) articulated the problem of regarding the other as if her subjectivity did not already exist apart from the subject's dubious power to confer recognition upon it. The other is not in actual fact the subject's projection, however he may relate to her as if she were. With a different point of departure, Markell's (2003) work also points to the problem of projection. He traces the failure of the demand for recognition to conceptually include the master subject's acknowledgment of the unbearable weakness within himself that *he* has been denying, that is, the vulnerability that the master projectively offloads. Lacking is not merely the master's recognition of the slave as equal but a kind of self-knowledge, an acknowledgment of something about himself: the suffering heretofore imposed upon/admitted only by the slave. But if this is so, then rectification would demand a further step beyond the master taking on board some weakness he could not previously bear. This proposition is illustrated by Markell, following Cavell, with reference to King Lear's suffering and disorientation as a consequence of his repudiation of Cordelia, and his final acknowledgment of his dependency to her. We should note that intersubjective repair demands performing an action *directed toward* the other in which acknowledging the violence of projecting weakness must also include that he is the cause of the other's suffering.

To these considerations of recognition I would add: If the other is the one who is meant to be liberated by this admission of responsibility, and who may have rightly demanded it, doesn't it follow that acknowledgment cannot be sundered

2   We have seen how the play with identities in the last decades have allowed the emergence of a vision of a lawful world in which there is greater trust in "pussies" of different stripes.

from recognition? Doesn't such acknowledgment also simultaneously constitute a recognition of the other's worthiness at the same time as an admission of the subject's unworthy action? When the movement of this transforming action from self-knowledge to acknowledgment becomes *mutual* knowledge of harm and vulnerability, then recognition and acknowledgment together form the two moments constituting the Third that holds this knowledge.

If one can admit having denied the other's humanity without the complementary reversal in which now one's self must take up the position of being unworthy to live, the Third has been reached. True remorse takes us to the third position beyond "Only one can live." The splitting has been overcome of the two moments in the dialectic: the double move in which the master acknowledges his vulnerability and the slave asserts the demand to be treated with recognition of dignity. Moving from projection of vulnerability to acknowledgment of what lies within further includes recognition of the other's independent existence and the harm to which projection led. This, in turn, evokes an internal confrontation with the self's own aggrandizement, even monstrousness, and the possibility of remorse rather than further aggression, as Lear reveals. However, rereading the story through Cordelia we might argue that as the other attains agency her emergence as subject is what destabilizes and transforms their relation.[3]

The foregoing analysis of moving out of dissociation into connection with the reality of the other's mind presumes the dual viewpoints of intrapsychic and intersubjective theory. When there is no possibility of intersubjective repair—when the figure of authority refuses acknowledgment or fears loss of power—the self turns to intrapsychic repair of the internal object instead. When mutual dependency cannot be negotiated, the other must be reduced to intrapsychic object of fantasy, onto whom the subject splits off unwanted weakness. Theoretically, the need is to distinguish such objects of projection from the real other. This move, as we have already seen, is central to the survival of destruction and overcoming of doer–done to relations. That is, the denial of humanity to the other is tantamount to the erasure of intersubjectivity, understood here as the ineluctable fact of mutual dependency on equally human others. The inability to embrace recognition within an interactive system of thirdness leaves the subject alone in a monadic world without intersubjective orientation.

The acceptance of vulnerability and wish to be liberated from the suffering of living without a surviving other of recognition assumes an actual, interpersonal

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3   Writing as feminists in the Second Wave of the 70s primarily white women took up position as the Other of male domination, destabilizing the opposition of immanence and transcendence, the idea of universal subject ala de Beauvoir. But no sooner had they appropriated subjectivity than they switched roles, now in the position of subject obliged to recognize the identity of the racialized Other. These confounding historical positions collided in confusing ways, now taken up in discussions of "intersectionality." Thus we are constantly rereading and indeed rewriting history—the more this is done in the spirit of repair rather than blame, the more victimhood can be replaced by agency.

or at least symbolic process of repair. The shift out of disconnection and dissociation requires acknowledgment by the subject of his *own* suffering incurred by this loss of the other. In turn, this disconnection separates us from a greater source of inspiration and linking—of self with other, mind with heart, shared suffering in the past and compassionate healing in our present action and imagined future. What I have elsewhere referred to as the movement of "many into one" (Benjamin, 2005). As I conclude this book, I will return to reflecting on how this process appears in the analytic relationship and witnessing dialogues in relation to traumatic memory and historical violence; how we move from the position of "failed witness" or bystander to acknowledging witness and how we become able to experience our own vulnerable humanity in a different way when we recognize the other's, through this action coming closer to realizing the sense of our interconnectedness and responsibility for one another.

In closing, let me say that writing these words in early 2017, at a moment when our political and social world is upended, the ability to recognize others and accept our interdependence has become a matter of greater urgency. It is my hope that as we are called upon to actively resist the infliction of harm, indeed resist the attempt to take our whole society into the mode of doer and done to, there will be some good use put to these efforts to grasp how we may step out of that complementarity into the position of the Third, from one living at the expense of the other into shared, responsible living together. At the moment, we are witnessing millions of people joining together with an inspiring will to resist and struggle against lawlessness without being drawn into violence or lapsing into despair. May this will prevail.