1 / Recognition and Destruction:
An Outline of Intersubjectivity

We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier for her to imagine how she would . . . become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling . . . that he had an equivalent center of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

In recent years analysts from diverse psychoanalytic schools have converged in the effort to formulate relational theories of the self (Eagle 1984, S. Mitchell 1988). What these approaches share is the belief that the human mind is interactive rather than monadic, that the psychoanalytic process should be understood as occurring between subjects rather than within the individual

(Atwood and Stolorow 1984, S. Mitchell 1988). Mental life is seen from an intersubjective perspective. Although this perspective has transformed both our theory and our practice in important ways, such transformations create new problems. A theory in which the individual subject no longer reigns absolute must confront the difficulty each subject has in recognizing the other as an equivalent center of experience (Benjamin 1988).

The problem of recognizing the other emerges the moment we consider that troublesome legacy of intrapsychic theory, the term *object*. In the original usage, still common in self psychology and object relations theories, the concept of object relations refers to the psychic internalization and representation of interactions between self and objects. While such theories ascribe a considerable role to the early environment and parental objects — in short, "real" others — they have taken us only to the point of recognizing that "where ego is, objects must be." So, for example, neither Fairbairn's insistence on the need for the whole object nor Kohut's declaration that selfobjects remain important throughout life addresses directly the difference between object and other. Perhaps the elision between "real" others and their internal representation is so widely tolerated because the epistemological question of what is reality and what is representation appears to us — in our justifiable humility — too ecumenical and lofty for our parochial craft. Or perhaps, as psychoanalysts, we are not really troubled by the question of reality.

But the unfortunate tendency to collapse other subjects into the rubric *objects* cannot be ascribed simply to this irresoluteness regarding reality. Nor can it be dismissed as a terminological embarrassment that greater linguistic precision might dissolve (see Kohut 1984). Rather, it is a symptom of the very problems in psychoanalysis that a relational theory should aim to cure. The inquiry into the intersubjective dimension of the

analytic encounter would aim to change our theory and practice so that "where objects were, subjects must be."

What does such a change mean? A beginning has been made with the introduction of the term *intersubjectivity* — the field of intersection between two subjectivities, the interplay between two different subjective worlds to define the analytic situation (Atwood and Stolorow 1984; Stolorow, Brandschaft, and Atwood 1987). But how is the meeting of two subjects different from the meeting of a subject and an object? Once we have acknowledged that the object makes an important contribution to the life of the subject, what is added by deciding to call this object another subject? And what are the impediments to the meeting of two minds?

To begin this inquiry, we must ask: what difference does the other make, the other who is truly perceived as outside, distinct from our mental field of operations? Isn't there a dramatic difference between the experience with the other perceived as outside the self and that with the subjectively conceived object? Winnicott formulated the basic outlines of this distinction in what may well be considered his most daring and radical statement, "The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications" (1969b). Since then, with a few recent exceptions (Eigen 1981, Modell 1984, Ghent 1989, Bollas 1989), there has been little effort to elaborate Winnicott's juxtaposition of the two possible relationships to the object. Yet, as I will show, the difference between the other as subject and the other as object is crucial for a relational psychoanalysis.

The distinction between the two types of relationships to the other can emerge clearly only if we acknowledge that both are endemic to psychic experience and hence are valid areas of psychoanalytic knowledge. If there is a contradiction between the two modes of experience, then we ought to probe it as a condition of knowledge rather than assume it to be a fork in the

road. Other theoretical grids that have split psychoanalytic thought — drive theory versus object relations theory, ego versus id psychology, intrapsychic versus interpersonal theory — insisted on a choice between opposing perspectives. I am proposing, instead, that the two dimensions of experience with the object/other are complementary, though they sometimes stand in an oppositional relationship. By embracing both dimensions, we can fulfill the intention of relational theories: to account both for the pervasive effects of human relationships on psychic development and for the equally ubiquitous effects of internal psychic mechanisms and fantasies in shaping psychological life and interaction.

I refer to the two categories of experience as the intrapsychic and the intersubjective dimensions (Benjamin 1988). The idea of intersubjectivity, which has been brought into psychoanalysis from philosophy (Habermas 1970, 1971, 1992), is useful because it specifically addresses the problem of defining the other as object. Intersubjectivity was formulated in deliberate contrast to the logic of subject and object, which predominates in Western philosophy and science. It refers to that zone of experience or theory in which the other is not merely the object of the ego's need/drive or cognition/perception but has a separate and equivalent center of self.

Intersubjective theory postulates that the other must be recognized as another subject in order for the self to fully experience his or her subjectivity in the other's presence. This means that we have a need for recognition and that we have a capacity to recognize others in return, thus making mutual recognition possible. But recognition is a capacity of individual development that is only unevenly realized — in a sense, the point of a relational psychoanalysis is to explain this fact. In Freudian metapsychology the process of recognizing the other "with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling" would

appear, at best, as a background effect of the relationship between ego and external reality. Feminist critics of psychoanalysis have suggested that the conceptualization of the first other, the mother, as an object underlies this theoretical lacuna. The cultural antithesis between male subject and female object contributed much to the failure to take into account the subjectivity of the other. Denial of the mother's subjectivity, in theory and in practice, profoundly impedes our ability to see the world as inhabited by equal subjects. My purpose is to show that, in fact, the capacity to recognize the mother as a subject is an important part of early development, and to bring the process of recognition into the foreground of our thinking.

I will suggest some preliminary outlines of the development of the capacity for recognition. In particular, I will focus on separation-individuation theory, showing how much more it can reveal when it is viewed through the intersubjective lens, especially in light of the contributions of both Daniel Stern and Winnicott. Because separation-individuation theory is formulated in terms of ego and object, it does not fully realize its own potential contribution. In the ego-object perspective the child is the individual, is seen as moving in a progression toward autonomy and separateness. The telos of this process is the creation of psychic structure through internalization of the object in the service of greater independence. Separation-individuation theory thus focuses on the structural residue of the child's interaction with the mother as object; it leaves in the unexamined background the aspects of engagement, connection, and active assertion that occur with the mother as other. This perspective is infantocentric, unconcerned with the source of the mother's responses, which reflect not only her pathology or health ("narcissistic" versus "good enough") but also her necessarily independent subjectivity. It also misses the *pleasure* of the evolving relationship with a partner from whom one

knows how to elicit a response but whose responses are not entirely predictable and assimilable to internal fantasy. The idea of pleasure was lost when ego psychology put the id on the back burner, but it might be restored by recognizing the subjectivity of the other.

An intersubjective perspective helps us transcend the infantocentric viewpoint of intrapsychic theory by asking how a person becomes capable of enjoying recognition with an other. Logically, recognizing the parent as subject cannot be the result simply of internalizing her as mental object. This is a developmental process that has barely begun to be explicated. How does a child develop into a person who, as a parent, is able to recognize her or his own child? What are the internal processes, the psychic landmarks, of such development? Where is the theory that tracks the development of the child's responsiveness, empathy, and concern, and not just the parent's sufficiency or failure?

It is in regard to these questions that most theories of the self have fallen short. Even self psychology, which has placed such emphasis on attunement and empathy and has focused on the intersubjectivity of the analytic encounter, has been tacitly one-sided in its understanding of the parent-child relationship and the development of intersubjective relatedness. Perhaps in reaction against the oedipal reality principle, Kohut (1977, 1984) defined the necessary confrontation with the other's needs or with limits in a self-referential way — optimal failures in empathy (parallel to analysts' errors) — as if there were nothing for children to learn about the other's rights or feelings. Although Kohut's goal was to enable individuals to open "new channels of empathy" and "in-tuneness between self and selfobject" (1984, p. 66), the self was always the recipient, not the giver, of empathy. The responsiveness of the selfobject by definition serves the function of "shoring up our self" throughout

life; but at what point are we concerned with the responsiveness of the outside other whom we love? The occasionally mentioned (perhaps more frequently assumed) "love object," who would presumably hold the place of outside other, has no articulated place in the theory. Thus, once again, the pleasure in mutuality between two subjects is reduced to its function of stabilizing the self, not of enlarging our awareness of the outside or of recognizing others as animated by independent, though similar, feelings.[1]

In this essay I would like to outline some crucial points in the development of recognition. It is certainly true that recognition begins with the other's confirming response, which tells us that we have created meaning, had an impact, revealed an intention. But very early on we find that recognition between persons — understanding and being understood, being in attunement — is becoming an end in itself. Recognition between persons is essentially mutual. By our very enjoyment of the other's confirming response, we recognize her in return. What the research on mother-infant interaction has uncovered about early reciprocity and mutual influence is best conceptualized as the development of the capacity for mutual recognition. The frame-by-frame studies of face-to-face play at three or four months of age have given us a kind of early history of recognition.

The pathbreaking work of Stern (1974, 1977, 1985) and the more recent contributions of Beebe (Beebe and Stern 1977, Beebe 1985, Beebe and Lachmann 1988) have illuminated how crucial the relationship of mutual influence is for early self-development. They have also shown that self-regulation is

1. My remarks are more apt for Kohut and early self psychology. Later writings show some tendency to correct this one-sidedness, to include the evolution of difference (e.g., Lachmann 1986) and the relationship to the object as other (Stolorow 1986).

achieved at this point through regulating the other: I can change my own mental state by causing the other to be more or less stimulating. Mother's recognition is the basis for the baby's sense of agency. Equally important, although less emphasized, is the other side of this play interaction: the mother is dependent to some degree on the baby's recognition. A baby who is less responsive is a less "recognizing" baby, and the mother who reacts to her apathetic or fussy baby by overstimulating or withdrawing is a mother feeling despair that the baby does not recognize her.

In Stern's view, however, early play does not yet constitute intersubjective relatedness (1985). Rather, he designates the next phase, when affective attunement develops at eight or nine months of age, as intersubjectivity proper. This is the moment when we discover that "there are other minds out there!" and that separate minds can share a similar state. I would agree that this phase constitutes an advance in recognition of the other, but the earlier interaction can be considered an antecedent in the form of concrete affective sharing. Certainly, from the standpoint of the mother whose infant returns her smile this is already the beginning of reciprocal recognition. Therefore, rather than designate the later phase as intersubjective relatedness, I would conceptualize a development of intersubjectivity in which there are key moments of transformation.

In this phase, as Stern (1985) emphasizes, the new thing is the sharing of the inner world. The infant begins to check out how the parent feels when the infant is discovering a new toy, and the parent demonstrates attunement by responding in another medium. By translating the same affective level into another modality — for example, from kinetic to vocal — the adult conveys the crucial fact that it is the *inner* experience that is congruent. The difference in form makes the element of similarity or sharing clear. I would add, the parent is not literally

sharing the same state, for the parent is (usually) excited by the infant's reaction, not by the toy itself. The parent is in fact taking pleasure in *contacting the child's mind.*

This is a good point at which to consider the contrast between intersubjective theory and ego psychology, a contrast that Stern stresses. The phase of discovering other minds coincides roughly with Mahler's differentiation and practicing, but there is an important difference in emphasis. In the intersubjective view, the infant's greater separation, which Mahler underscores in this period, actually proceeds in tandem with and enhances the felt connection with the other. The joy of intersubjective attunement is: This *Other* can share my feeling. According to Mahler (Mahler, Pine, and Bergmann 1975), though, the infant of ten months is primarily involved in exploring, in the "love affair with the world." The checking back to look at mother is not about sharing the experience but about safety/anxiety issues, "refueling." This is a phase in which Mahler sees the mother not as contacting the child's mind but as giving him or her a push from the nest.

While Stern emphasizes his differences with Mahler, I think the two models are complementary, not mutually exclusive. It seems to me that intersubjective theory amplifies separation-individuation theory at this point by focusing on the affective exchange between parent and child and by stressing the simultaneity of connection and separation. Instead of opposite endpoints of a longitudinal trajectory, connection and separation form a tension that requires the equal magnetism of both sides.

It is this tension between connection and separation that I want to track beyond the period of affective attunement. If we follow it into the second year of life, we can see a tension developing between assertion of self and recognition of the other. Translating Mahler's rapprochement crisis into the terms of intersubjectivity, we can say that in this crisis the tension be-

tween asserting self and recognizing the other breaks down and is manifested as a conflict between self and other.

My analysis of this crisis derives, in part, from philosophy, from Hegel's formulation of the problem of recognition in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. In his discussion of the conflict between "the independence and dependence of self-consciousness" Hegel showed how the self's wish for absolute independence conflicts with the self's need for recognition. In trying to establish itself as an independent entity, the self must yet recognize the other as a subject like itself in order to be recognized by the other. This immediately compromises the self's absoluteness and poses the problem that the other could be equally absolute and independent. Each self wants to be recognized and yet to maintain its absolute identity: the self says, I want to affect you, but I want nothing you do or say to affect me; I am who I am. In its encounter with the other, the self wishes to affirm its absolute independence, even though its need for the other and the other's similar wish undercut that affirmation.

This description of the self's absoluteness covers approximately the same territory as narcissism in Freudian theory, particularly its manifestation as omnipotence: the insistence on being one (everyone is identical to me) and all alone (there is nothing outside of me that I do not control). Freud's conception of the earliest ego (1911, 1915a), with its hostility to the outside or its incorporation of everything good into itself, is not unlike Hegel's absolute self. Hegel's notion of the conflict between independence and dependence meshes with the classic psychoanalytic view in which the self does not wish to give up omnipotence.

But even if we reject the Freudian view of the ego, the confrontation with the other's subjectivity and with the limits of self-assertion is difficult to negotiate. The need for recognition entails this fundamental paradox: at the very moment of realiz-

ing our own independent will, we are dependent upon another to recognize it. At the very moment we come to understand the meaning of *I, myself*, we are forced to see the limitations of that self. At the moment when we understand that separate minds can share similar feelings, we begin to learn that these minds can also disagree.

Let us return to Mahler's description of rapprochement and see how it illustrates the paradox of recognition and how the infant is supposed to negotiate that paradox. Before rapprochement, in the self-assertion of the practicing phase, the infant still takes herself for granted, and her mother as well. She does not make a sharp discrimination between doing things with mother's help and doing without it. She is too excited by *what* she is doing to reflect on *who* is doing it. Beginning when the child is about fourteen months of age, a conflict emerges between her grandiose aspirations and the perceived reality of her limitations and dependency. Although she is now able to do more, the toddler is aware of what she can't do and what she can't make mother do — for example, stay with her instead of going out. Many of the power struggles that begin here (wanting the whole pear, not a slice) can be summed up as a demand: "Recognize my intent!" She will insist that mother share everything, participate in all her deeds, acquiesce to all her demands. The toddler is also up against the increased awareness of separateness, and, consequently, of vulnerability: she can move away from mother — but mother can also move away from her.

If we reframe this description from the intersubjective perspective, the infant now knows that different minds can feel differently, that she is dependent as well as independent. In this sense, rapprochement is the crisis of recognizing the other — specifically, of confronting mother's independence. It is no accident that mother's leaving becomes a focal point here, for it confronts the child not only with separation but with the other's

independent aims. For similar reasons, the mother may experience conflict at this point: the child's demands are now threatening, no longer simply needs but expressions of the child's independent (tyrannical) will. The child is different from the mother's own mental fantasy, no longer *her* object. The child may switch places with the mother, from passive to active. The omnipotence once attributed to the "good" all-giving mother now resides instead in the child. How the mother responds to her child's and her own aggression depends on her ability to mitigate such fantasies with a sense of real agency and separate selfhood, on her confidence in her child's ability to survive conflict, loss, imperfection. The mother has to be able both to set clear boundaries for her child and to recognize the child's will, both to insist on her own independence and to respect that of the child — in short, to balance assertion and recognition. If she cannot do this, omnipotence continues, attributed either to the mother or the self; in neither case can we say that the development of mutual recognition has been furthered.

From the standpoint of intersubjective theory, the ideal "resolution" of the paradox of recognition is that it continue as a *constant tension* between recognizing the other and asserting the self. In Mahler's theory, however, the rapprochement conflict appears to be resolved through internalization, the achievement of object constancy — when the child can separate from mother or be angry at her and still be able to contact her presence or goodness. In a sense, this resolution sets the goal of development too low: it is difficult and therefore sufficient for the child to accomplish the realistic integration of good and bad object representations (Kernberg 1980). The sparse formulation of the end of the rapprochement conflict is anticlimactic, leaving us to wonder, is this all? In this picture, the child has only to accept that mother can disappoint her; she does not begin to shift her

center of gravity to recognize that mother does this because she has her own center.

The breakdown and re-creation of the tension between asserting one's own reality and accepting the other's is a neglected but equally important aspect of the crisis. This aspect emerges when we superimpose Winnicott's idea of destroying the object (1969b) on Mahler's rapprochement crisis. It is destruction — negation in Hegel's sense — that enables the subject to go beyond relating to the object through identification, projection, and other intrapsychic processes pertaining to the subjectively conceived object. Destruction makes possible the transition from relating (intrapsychic) to using the object, to carrying on a relationship with an other who is objectively perceived as existing outside the self, an entity in her own right. That is, in the mental act of negating or obliterating the object, which may be expressed in the real effort to attack the other, we find out whether the real other survives. If she survives without retaliating or withdrawing under the attack, then we know her to exist outside ourselves, not just as our mental product.

Winnicott's scheme can be expanded to postulate not a sequential relationship but rather a basic tension between denial and affirmation of the other, between omnipotence and recognition of reality. Another way to understand the conflicts that occur in rapprochement is through the concepts of destruction and survival: the wish to assert the self absolutely and deny everything outside one's own mental omnipotence must sometimes crash against the implacable reality of the other. In the collision Winnicott has in mind, however, aggression does not occur "reactive to the encounter with the reality principle" but rather "creates the quality of externality." When the destructiveness damages neither the parent nor the self, external reality comes into view as a sharp, distinct contrast to the inner fantasy

world. The outcome of this process is not simply reparation or restoration of the good object (Eigen 1981; Ghent,1990) but love, the sense of discovering the other. ("I destroyed you!" "I love you!")

The flip side of Winnicott's analysis could be stated as follows: when destruction is not countered with survival, when the other's reality does not come into view, a defensive process of internalization takes place. Aggression becomes a problem — how to dispose of the bad feeling. ("What about waste-disposal?") What cannot be worked through and dissolved with the outside other is transposed into a drama of internal objects, shifting from the domain of the intersubjective into the domain of the intrapsychic. In real life, even when the other's response dissipates aggression, there is no perfect process of destruction and survival; there is always also internalization. All experience is elaborated intrapsychically, we might venture to say, but when the other does not survive and aggression is not dissipated, experience becomes almost exclusively intrapsychic. It therefore seems fallacious to regard internalization processes only as breakdown products or as defenses; rather, we could see them as a kind of underlying substratum of mental activity — a constant symbolic digestion process that constitutes an important part of the cycle of exchange between the individual and the outside. It is the loss of balance between the intrapsychic and the intersubjective, between fantasy and reality, that is the problem.

Indeed, the problem in psychoanalytic theory has been that internalization — either the defensive or the structure-building aspects, depending on which object relations theory you favor — has obscured the component of destruction that Winnicott emphasizes: discovering "that fantasy and fact, both important, are nevertheless different from each other" (1964, p. 62). The complementarity of the intrapsychic and intersubjective modal-

ities is important here: as Winnicott makes clear, it is in contrast to the fantasy of destruction that the reality of survival is so satisfying and authentic.

Winnicott thus offers the notion of a reality that can be loved, something beyond the integration of good and bad. While the intrapsychic ego has reality imposed from without, the intersubjective ego discovers reality. This reality principle does not represent a detour to wish fulfillment or a modification of the pleasure principle. Nor is it the acceptance of a false life of adaptation. Rather, it is a continuation under more complex conditions of the infant's original fascination with and love of what is outside, her appreciation of difference and novelty. This appreciation is the element in differentiation that gives separation its positive, rather than simply hostile, coloring: love of the world, not merely leaving or distancing from mother. To the extent that mother herself is placed outside, she can be loved; then separation is truly the other side of connection to the other.

It is this appreciation of the other's reality that completes the picture of separation and explains what there is beyond internalization: the establishment of shared reality. Elsa First (1988) has provided some relevant observations of how the toddler begins to apprehend mutuality as a concomitant of separateness — specifically, in relation to the mother's leaving. The vehicle of this resolution is, expanding Winnicott's notion, cross-identification: the capacity to put oneself in the place of the other based on empathic understanding of similarities of inner experience. The two-year-old's initial role-playing imitation of the departing mother is characterized by the spirit of pure retaliation and reversal — "I'll do to you what you do to me." But gradually the child begins to identify with the mother's subjective experience and realizes, "I could miss you as you miss me," and, therefore, "I know that you could wish to have

your own life as I wish to have mine." First shows how, by recognizing such shared experience, the child actually moves from a retaliatory world of control to a world of mutual understanding and shared feeling. This analysis amplifies the idea of object constancy, in which the good object survives the bad experience, by adding the idea of recognizing that the leaving mother is not bad but independent, a person like me. In recognizing this, the child gains not only her own independence (as traditionally emphasized) but also the pleasure of shared understanding.

Looking backward, we can trace the outlines of a developmental trajectory of intersubjective relatedness up to this point. Its core feature is recognizing the similarity of inner experience in tandem with difference. Recognition begins with "We are feeling this feeling" and moves to "I know that you, who are another mind, share this same feeling." In rapprochement, however, a crisis occurs as the child begins to confront difference — "You and I don't want or feel the same thing." The initial response to this discovery is a breakdown of recognition between self and other: "I insist on my way, I refuse to recognize you, I begin to try to coerce you; and therefore I experience your refusal as a reversal: you are coercing me." As in earlier phases, the capacity for mutual recognition must stretch to accommodate the tension of difference, the knowledge of conflicting feelings.

In the third year of life this issue can emerge in symbolic play. The early play at retaliatory reversal may be a kind of empowerment, where the child feels, "I can do to you what you do to me." But then the play expands to include the emotional identification with the other's position and becomes reflexive, so that, as First puts it, "I know you know what I feel." In this sense, the medium of shared feeling remains as important to intersubjectivity in later phases as in early ones, but it is now

extended to symbolic understanding of feeling so that "You know what I feel, even when I want or feel the opposite of what you want or feel." This advance in differentiation means that "We can share feelings without my fearing that my feelings are simply your feelings."

The child who can imaginatively entertain both roles — leaving and being left — begins to transcend the complementary form of the mother-child relationship. The complementary structure organizes the relationship of giver and taker, doer and done to, powerful and powerless. It allows us to reverse roles, but not to alter them. In the reversible relationship, each person can play only one role at a time: one person is recognized, the other negated; one is subject, the other object. This complementarity does not dissolve omnipotence but shifts it from one partner to the other. The movement out of the world of complementary power relations into the world of mutual understanding constitutes an important step in the dismantling of omnipotence: power is dissolved rather than transferred back and forth between child and mother in an endless cycle. Again, this movement refers not to a one-time sequence or final accomplishment but to an ongoing tension between complementarity and mutuality.

When mutual recognition is not restored, when shared reality does not survive destruction, then complementary structures and "relating" to the inner object predominate. Because this occurs commonly enough, the intrapsychic, subject-object concept of the mind actually conforms to the dominant mode of internal experience. This is why — notwithstanding our intersubjective potential — the reversible complementarity of subject and object that is conceptualized by intrapsychic theory illuminates so much of the internal world. The principles of mind Freud first analyzed — for example, reversal of opposites like active and passive, the exchangeability or displacement of

objects — thus remain indispensable guides to the inner world of objects.

But even when the capacity for recognition is well developed, when the subject can use shared reality and receive the nourishment of "other-than-me substance," the intrapsychic capacities remain. The mind's ability to manipulate, to displace, to reverse, to turn one thing into another, is not a mere negation of reality but the source of mental creativity. Furthermore, when things go well, complementarity is a step on the road to mutuality. The toddler's insistent reciprocity — his efforts to reverse the relationship with the mother, to play at feeding, grooming, and leaving her — is one step in the process of identification that ultimately leads to understanding. Only when this process is disrupted, when the complementary form of the relationship is not balanced by mutual activity, does reversal become entrenched and the relationship become a struggle for power.

The creation of a symbolic space within the infant-mother relationship fosters the dimension of intersubjectivity, a concomitant of mutual understanding. This space, as Winnicott emphasized, is a function not only of the child's play alone in the presence of the mother but also of play between mother and child, beginning with the earliest play of mutual gaze. As we see in First's analysis of play using identification with the leaving mother, the transitional space also evolves within the interaction between mother and child. Within this play, the mother is "related to" in fantasy but at the same time "used" to establish mutual understanding, a pattern that parallels transference play in the analytic situation. In the elaboration of this play the mother can appear as the child's fantasy object and another subject without threatening the child's subjectivity.

The existence of this space is ultimately what makes the intrapsychic capacities creative rather than destructive; perhaps

it is another way of referring to the tension between using and relating. Using — that is, recognizing — implies the capacity to transcend complementary structures, but not the absence of them. It does not mean the disappearance of fantasy or negation but that "destruction becomes the unconscious backcloth for love of a real object" (Winnicott 1969b, p. 111). It means a balance of destruction with recognition. In the broadest sense, internal fantasy is always eating up or negating external reality — "While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) fantasy" (p. 106). The loved one is continually being destroyed, but its survival means that we can eat our reality and have it too. From the intersubjective standpoint, all fantasy is the negation of the real other, whether its content is negative or idealized — just as, from the intrapsychic view, external reality is simply that which is internalized as fantasy. The ongoing interplay of destruction and recognition is a dialectic between fantasy and external reality.

The original challenge for interpersonal and object relations theories was to eliminate the notion of a biological drive underpinning destructiveness and yet find a place for the destructive and reality-negating forces in mental life. My exposition of the crisis of the self is meant, in part, to answer this challenge. If we want to claim that relations with others are essential to the self, then we cannot help but acknowledge aggression as a necessary moment of psychic life. Many relational thinkers have argued that aggression is not a primary but a secondary response to deprivation or frustration. But this is true only from the point of view of one-person psychology, of intrapsychic experience, which defines that which frustrates us — the will of the other — as inessential, external, not intrinsic to the self. From an intersubjective standpoint, the clash of two wills is inherent in subject-subject relations, an ineluctable moment that every self has to confront. (Any parent who has daily expe-

rience with two toddlers grabbing the same toy and screeching "Mine!" is bound to wonder whether it was naive to abandon drive theory; only the most utopian anarchist could deny that this crisis is one that everyone who has equals must confront.) Of course, we may theoretically distinguish between reactions to "unnecessary" frustration and loss and this sort of aggression, even if in practice the lines between them sometimes smudge.

The intersubjective analysis of the crisis of recognition may help to counter the idealism that otherwise afflicts relational theories — the tendency to throw out with the drives the fundamental psychic place of aggression. I suspect that we need this fundamental acceptance to tolerate and work with aggression in the clinical situation, that otherwise we may be tempted to see it as defensive, "bad," or inauthentic. In any event, respect for the inner world — including the "bad" — leads me to prefer a theoretical perspective in which intersubjectivity rivals but does not defeat the intrapsychic. Such a theoretical approach can then explicitly try to account for the imbalance between intrapsychic and intersubjective structures without succumbing to the temptation to make the inner world a mere reflection of or reaction to the outer.

In the analytic process, the effort to share the productions of fantasy changes the status of fantasy itself, moving it from inner reality to intersubjective communication. The fantasy object who is being related to or destroyed and the usable other who is "there to receive the communication" and be loved complement each other. What we find in the good hour is a momentary balance between intrapsychic and intersubjective dimensions, a sustained tension or rapid movement between the patient's experience of us as inner material and as the recognizing other. Suspension of the conflict between the two experiences reflects the establishment of a transitional space in which

the otherness of the analyst can be ignored as well as recognized.[2] The experience of a space that allows both creative exploration within omnipotence and acknowledgment of an understanding other is, in part, what is therapeutic about the relationship.

The restoration of balance between the intrapsychic and the intersubjective in the psychoanalytic process should not be construed as an adaptation that reduces fantasy to reality; rather, it is practice in the sustaining of contradiction. When the tension of sustaining contradiction breaks down, as it frequently does, the intersubjective structures — mutuality, simultaneity, and paradox — are subordinated to complementary structures. The breakdown of tension between self and other in favor of relating as subject and object is a common fact of mental life. For that matter, breakdown is a common feature within intersubjective relatedness — what counts is the ability to restore or repair the relationship. As Beebe and Lachmann have proposed, one of the main principles of the early dyad is that relatedness is characterized not by continuous harmony but by continuous disruption and repair (Beebe and Lachmann 1988, 1994; Tronick 1989).

Thus an intersubjective theory can explore the development of mutual recognition without equating breakdown with pathology. It does not require a normative ideal of balance that equates breakdown with failure and the accompanying phenomena — internalization, fantasy, aggression — with pathology. If the clash of two wills is an inherent part of intersubjective relations, then no perfect environment can take the sting from the encounter with otherness. The question becomes how the inevitable elements of negation are processed. It is "good

2. Perhaps for this reason Winnicott chooses to begin "The Use of an Object" with a reminder that it is essential to accept the paradox that the baby both discovers and creates transitional phenomena, that is, they exist both outside and inside.

enough" that the inward movement of negating reality and creating fantasy should eventually be counterbalanced by an outward movement of recognizing the outside. To claim anything more for intersubjectivity would invite a triumph of the external, a terrifying psychic vacuity, an end to creativity altogether. A relational psychoanalysis should leave room for the messy, intrapsychic side of creativity and aggression; it is the contribution of the intersubjective view that may give these elements a more hopeful cast, showing destruction to be the Other of recognition.