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The Concept of Intersubjectivity in Psychoanalysis: Taking Critical Stock**

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Introduction

The past two or three decades have seen nearly all psychoanalytical schools of thought undergo a change towards a stronger intersubjective orientation. Timewise, it took place more or less in parallel within the various schools and above all was fuelled by clinical psychoanalysis and the changing role of the analyst in treatment. In the process the discussion of three concepts drove this development forward: countertransference, enactment and projective identification. The subjectivity of the analyst as an instrument of knowledge was integrated into the concept of countertransference, transference of the patient onto the person of the analyst was extended to the analytical situation as a whole, and concepts like projective identification and enactment were promoted to senior notions in treatment theory. In addition, the role of the analyst as a clinical authority and his or her position as an objective observer of analytical events have been transformed. Nowadays, analytical knowledge acquisition occurs largely on the basis of the interactional events occurring between analyst and analysand. In the course of this clinical-theoretical development the relational psychoanalysis to have emerged from Sullivan's interpersonal psychoanalysis has attained greater influence and significance.

Radical intersubjectivist-relational approaches not only stress the inevitability of a mutual, reciprocal influence but due to the ineluctable subjectivity of the subjects also exclude the possibility of an objective awareness of the psychological reality of the analysand.

The impulses for these further developments also came out of the related sciences, attachment theory, empirical infant and early child research and, of late, out of the neurosciences. Developmental research has shown how, from the outset, the childlike self emerges from reciprocal regulation and

*This paper forms part of a series of Education papers on Intersubjectivity: see H.P. Schwartz, “Intersubjectivity and dialecticism”, IJP 93 (2012): 401-425.
[1]Translated into English by Tim Davies.

recognition processes in the primary relationship. Modern research into early mentalization processes postulates a self that can only materialize by being mirrored by the psyche of the primary object. Another person is needed to experience our own self.

Such a conception of self-emergence has parallels in philosophical and sociological thinking, thus bringing into play the societal, cultural, intellectual and philosophical trends of our age that extend into the changes in psychoanalytical theory and technique. In Western societies, individualization and democratization processes have made lasting changes to the status and self-image of the individual. Taking this development into consideration, the horizon of understanding is broadened, making transparent how psychoanalysis reacts to the individual's change in status and how, in its theorizing, it absorbs impulses from philosophy and the social sciences, which for their part have undergone an intersubjective-constructivist about-turn.

As long as intrapsychic thinking prevailed, the concept of the self could denote personal completeness; but the more that interpersonal thinking came to the fore here, a gap opened up, increasingly gaining a place in psychoanalytical theory for the concept of the subject and subjectivity as a holistic notion for the psychic experience of the individual. Psychoanalytical theory formation thus borrows from philosophy. A subject-subject relationship now took the place of the subject-object relationship in order to emphasize the intersubjective reciprocity. An additional intersubjective concept pair, which emanating from philosophy found a place in psychoanalytical thinking, is the dialectic relationship of self and other. This describes a self - only as a holistic concept in terms of the subject - which derives its *Selbstsein* ['self-being'] from the interactions with another, initially with the primary object, as well as remaining dependent on the other in further life in order to comprehend itself. It will come as no surprise, then, that virtually all intersubjective psychoanalytical theories borrow from philosophy, structurally and conceptually, especially from Georg Friedrich Hegel, the phenomenological and socio-ontological philosophical approaches of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber, from the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, from Emmanuel Lévinas and Jürgen Habermas, and from modern constructivist philosophical approaches.

Thinking in terms of intersubjective categories, it is not sufficient, as in a two-person psychology, to describe two players having an effect on each other; rather, the interaction itself, which cannot be disaggregated into individual proportions for each of the interaction partners, must be conceptualized. An encounter is always more than the impact it has on those doing the encountering. Therefore, the difficulty facing all intersubjective theory approaches in psychoanalysis lies in describing the intersubjective itself. Psychoanalysis is accustomed to thinking in intrapsychic, dyadic and even triadic concepts. Strictly speaking, when talking of intersubjectivity, it involves something that cannot be grasped in these conceptualities. Intersubjectivity is more than an interactive reciprocal regulation of experience and behaviour. So we find a variety of notions and concepts if the psychoanalytical situation is to be described as a prototypical situation of intersubjective encounter. Thus, for example, we find 'encounter', 'moments of meeting',

'mutual recognition', 'the third', the 'in-between', the 'bi-personal field'. Such notions can exert a great fascination; in their usage, however, they are often neither adequately thought through nor properly anchored conceptually. The encounter *per se* is something new, or else it produces something new, something third and quite different. Theoretically, it is valid to capture both, the event and the result; otherwise, strictly speaking, it will not be possible to talk about an intersubjective theory. On the other hand the two interacting subjects are not totally absorbed by their immediate present relationship. If, as in many of the modern intersubjective theories, the self is perceived as constantly involved in intersubjective situations or the intersubjective field is understood as an irreducible whole, then consequently an - as ever - uniform self/subject with a limited degree of autonomy threatens to disappear from the theory or is replaced by the conception of a multiple self, the respective proportions of which are anchored and bound up in different interactional situations. It is not difficult to retrace postmodern thinking, with its deconstruction of the subject, in it.

These issues will occupy us below. Presumably, it will already have become clear that no consensus exists on the matter of what, in the intersubjective consideration of mental phenomena, is understood by 'intersubjective'. It is not easy to find one's way through the variety of intersubjective theories - beyond tagging them as generically 'intersubjective'. More and more in psychoanalytical works, the interactive conscious and unconscious communicative exchange within the analytical dyad is being captured with the concept of the intersubjective. That can be confusing, and in the process it threatens to lose sight of the fact that, at its core, intersubjectivity takes the nature of an event, giving rise to something new that transcends the contributions of the two actors. One of the main strands of my deliberations thus pursues the question of whether and how intersubjectivity in the true sense is described in the individual conceptions and which conscious and unconscious processes playing out between the actors of the analytical dyad are associated with it. I shall attempt to set out the key positions, albeit without staking any claim to completeness. This account will take in a number of the problem issues with which these theories have to contend. By way of conclusion, I shall describe them again thematically.

The current debate on intersubjectivity that is being conducted in North America primarily, and apart from the intersubjective change in ego-psychology, also has to do with the integration of the relational forays into the psychoanalytical mainstream.[2] I shall begin my account with this region, therefore, then pass to other psychoanalytical spheres of culture.

American Ego-Psychology's Move across to Intersubjectivity

As American ego-psychology opened up to the concept of countertransference, the end of the 1980s saw the start of a debate on the phenomena of enactment, which gradually brought about an opening-up to intersubjective

[2]On this point, cf. also Schwartz (2012).

thinking. In particular, countertransference enactment drove theoretical reflection forward, bringing the subjectivity and vulnerability of the analyst into an interactive-intersubjective context and bringing them out of the darkness of an inadequate analytical-technical reaction. Enactments take place in every analysis and are inevitable in order to achieve progress and mental change. Their intersubjective dynamics is grounded in repressed or split conflicts of the analysand, which for their part then actualize unconscious conflicts in the analyst, thus drawing him into an intersubjective scene. In the enactment, therefore, an unconscious happening motivated by both sides expresses itself, and in this sense it is a relation-specific joint creation or co-created experience. However, the analyst's analytical capability for reflection enables him or her to step outside of the intersubjective happening again and adopt an objective-observational perspective, in order to make the enactment comprehensible and cogent to oneself and to the analysand.

The actually intersubjective, the ‘inter’ or ‘between’ in the case of enactment, consists of the fact that it only happens if the stirred-up conflicts in the analyst and the patient are fitting together, which is to say that an intersubjective resonance and communication arises between the unconscious of the analyst and of the analysand (thus especially McLaughlin, 1991). Enactment takes the form of an affectively immediate encounter, which can be conveyed in the analytical process by means of understanding afterwards.

In this development Nancy Chodorow (2004) sees an intersubjective ego-psychology arising, the pioneers of which are Erik Erikson and Hans Loewald for her. She finds the common denominator for this intersubjective direction in a particular view of countertransference which, unlike that in the Kleinian concept of projective identification, is not defined primarily by the psyche of the patient here but above all foregrounds the individual experience of the analyst or accentuates its character as a co-creation of both players' subjectivity. Intersubjective ego-psychologists operate with both perspectives: the intrapsychic one-person perspective as well as that of a co-created field, which is more than the sum of the two interacting individuals. Both perspectives fuse in the understanding of the analytical situation and Chodorow recognizes therein the specifically American individualistic element. Among the exponents of the intersubjective orientation she includes Dale Boesky, Judith Fingert Chused, Theodore Jacobs, Owen Renik and the more relationally oriented Irwin Z. Hoffman.

Intersubjectivity as Phenomenological Systems-Theory Contextualization (Stolorow, Atwood and Orange)

Robert Stolorow and his collaborators criticize psychoanalysis for having followed Descartes' epistemic approach for far too long and thus having viewed the subjects as isolated monads (Stolorow and Atwood 1992). Two-person psychology also remains rooted in a Cartesian theory of the isolated psyche, for it can only conceive of intersubjectivity as two

separate minds “bumping into each other” (Orange, Atwood and Stolorow, 1997, p. 68).

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Stolorow's approach is a dynamic systems theory. The intersubjective field is the “contextual precondition for having any experience at all” (Stolorow, 2002, p. 330). Psychological phenomena can never be understood without the intersubjective context in which they play out. They cannot be eliminated from it. Individuality thus arises from the “interplay of two subjectivities” and can only be sustained by such (Orange *et al.*, 1997, p. 15). “Intersubjective systems theory seeks to comprehend psychological phenomena not as products of isolated intrapsychic mechanisms, but as forming at the interface of reciprocally interacting worlds of experience … Intrapsychic determinism thus gives way to an unremitting intersubjective contextualism” (Stolorow, 2002, p. 330). Accordingly, the patient's experience cannot be studied in isolation, only the co-created intersubjective field. Thus, for instance, resistance is not an individual behaviour of the patient's in a particular situation; rather, the question to be investigated is “how analyst and patient have co-constructed this logjam” (Orange *et al.*, 1997, p. 76).

Stolorow, Atwood and Orange represent a radical intersubjective theory in which both subjects still feature only as realms of experience formed relationally and by the life-world. Their epistemological sources for this phenomenological field theory are Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Gadamer's contextual hermeneutics. Stolorow and colleagues apply this epistemological, abstract phenomenological view to psychic phenomena directly. Accordingly, intersubjectivity is not comprehensible as a psychological phenomenon but remains an abstract principle and an ontological condition of all experience. Albeit nominally still existent, the subject is ultimately dispelled into different intersubjective structured realms of experience and possesses no independence, not even partial, from the intersubjective field. Consequently, in psychoanalytical terms, all that can be investigated is whatever both partners share with each other and whatever they co-create. Their respective individual otherness or alienness remains theoretically undefined and can no longer be the object of the analysis. Intersubjectivity as a specific happening, which admittedly stems from the intersubjective regulation, but in addition has the specific character of an event that is ultimately rooted phenomenologically in an encounter of self and other, becomes no longer conceptually tangible in the process.

Different from this systems-theory approach of Stolorow *et al.* are intersubjective theory approaches which conceptualize intersubjectivity above all as reciprocity of recognition processes. For Aron and Harris (2005) relational psychoanalysis is not a new form of schooling but an independent view of the analytical relationship and the analytical process. Above all, it concentrates on the ‘between’ in the relations between people, on the relationality. Consequently, there is no uniform theory either, so the argument goes, only different projection theories. These include Mitchell's relational conflict theory, Greenberg's theory of drive dualism, Ogden's and Benjamin's individually variant intersubjectivity theories, and Hoffman's social-constructivist theory. In what follows I shall concentrate on Ogden's and Benjamin's projection theories.

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Thomas Ogden's Concept of the ‘Analytic(al) Third’

For Thomas Ogden (1994, 2004) the contemporary theory of psychoanalysis has reached a point where we can no longer speak of the analyst and analysand as separate subjects who treat each other as objects, but nowadays it strongly stresses the interdependence of subject and object. Central to his conception of an analytical intersubjectivity is their dialectical nature. One of its starting points is Winnicott's thinking on the mother-child unit (“there is no such thing as an infant”) and the dynamic tension that arises as a result of mother and child coexisting simultaneously in their separateness. Although Ogden does operate on the basis of the analyst's subjectivity, the latter's personal properties and history, respectively, are recontextualized through the intersubjective experience in the analytical setting. Even if what

emerges in the analyst is one's own highly idiosyncratic ideas, physical feelings or recollections, Ogden does not view them as individually determined but as the creation of an experience "that has not previously existed in the form it was now taking" (2004, p. 184). All aspects of the experience are transformed by the analyst's reverie so as to become a manifestation of the unconscious interplay of analytical subjects. Ogden, however, also stresses that the analyst can be within and without the unconscious intersubjectivity at the same time. That makes the asymmetrical nature of the analytical relationship possible. Ogden terms the product of the unconscious interplay the 'analytic third', a third subjectivity, which is an independent dynamic unit of the intersubjective event - generated by the analyst and analysand, admittedly, but both created for their part by the analytical third.[3] The experience of the analytic third also has the quality of intimacy between analyst and patient. It is of particular significance because for many patients it can be a new first-time experience of a healthy, generative form of object relatedness.

In order to appreciate this enriching, vitalizing effect of intersubjective experience in more general psychoanalytical terms, Ogden uses the concept of projective identification as a form of the unconscious, intersubjective thirdness:

> *Projective identification must be understood in terms of a mutually creating, negating, and preserving dialectic of subjects, each of whom allows himself to be 'subjugated' by the other - i.e. negated in such a way as to become, through the other, a third subject (the subject of projective identification) … The individuals engaged in this form of relatedness unconsciously subjugate themselves to a mutually generated intersubjective third for the purpose of freeing themselves from the limits of whom they had been to this point. In projective identification, analyst and analysand are both limited and enriched; each is stifled and vitalized. (2004, p. 189)*

For Ogden this subjugating analytic third is the vehicle of new experience and of psychological growth. In order to reach that stage, however, the subjugating

[3]As conceptions akin to his intersubjective view of the analytical relationship, he names Bion's and Green's work on the analytic object and the Barangers' concept of the analytic field. His concept of the third, according to Ogden, must not be mixed up with a triadic competence that arises as a result of the oedipal triangulation. The same also applies to Benjamin's conception of a third.

third must be superseded by the "reappropriation of the (transformed) subjectivities by the participants as separate (and yet interdependent) individuals" (2004, p. 193).

In his dialectical conception of the analytic third Ogden relies on the Hegelian dialectic, as familiar to him through the version by Alexander Kojeve. In addition to that, he finds in Hegel's dialectic of master and servant a philosophical conception analogous to his understanding of projective identification as a 'subjugating third'. It is quite generally true: "An intersubjective dialectic of recognizing and being recognized serves as the foundation of the creation of individual subjectivity. If there is a failure of recognition of each by the other, 'the middle term [the dialectical tension] collapses' into 'a dead unity' (Kojève, 1934-1935, p. 14) of static, non-self-reflective being" (2004, p. 192). According to Hegel the individual can then become self-reflective only if he divests himself into the relationship, which for Ogden means that both must projectively identify the other with his/her own self-experience "in order to find an exit from unending, futile wanderings in their own internal object world" (2004, p. 193). Here intersubjectivity is elevated to an act of liberating the individual from his isolated existence.

Intersubjectivity as Triangulation Process of Reciprocal Recognition (Jessica Benjamin)

Jessica Benjamin (1998, 2004) defines intersubjectivity with reference to Hegel and Habermas as a relationship determined by mutual recognition. Seeking recognition is a human need but - as borne out by Hegel - it can only be met if we first and concurrently recognize the other, who has to recognize us, as the recognition we receive through him will

otherwise not be fully valid or will even be worthless. Benjamin anchors the process of recognition in human development and understands the capacity for mutual recognition as a separate trajectory from the internalization of object relations. She asks herself the question of how we can notionalize what is actually intersubjective, namely the mediation of 'I' and 'you' conceptually. Her solution is the so-called 'third', an intersubjective mental space co-created by both subjects. It is akin to Winnicott's notion of transitional space and hinges on the ability to surrender, i.e. allow oneself a certain letting-go of the self, adopt the view of the other and perceive things from his/her perspective. Benjamin distinguishes this form of relationship from the complementary relationship in which the subject-object principle prevails. One acts, the other is its object, i.e. both partners are located in the "orbit of the other's escalating reactivity" (2004, p. 9).

In human development the space of the third must first be created by the mother, since she adapts to the infant, affectively agrees, mirrors its feelings and reactions, and thus gives the child the possibility of identifying with this third and being able to occupy the mental space itself. Things follow a similar pattern in analytical treatment, so it is said. The analyst first has to make the "one in the third", that part of the third that is constituted by oneness, i.e. the analyst must identify profoundly with

the patient from which the "shared third" of analyst and patient can then be derived. This shared third opens up a mental space for the thought and the possibility of experiencing mutual recognition. However, this is preceded by the analyst accepting the necessity "of becoming involved in a process that is often outside our control and understanding" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 41). That is to say, the analyst ineluctably gets into enactments or therapeutic impasses, i.e. complementary forms of relationship. He can only resolve them if he accepts his own feelings of shame, inadequacy and guilt, admitting what he is contributing to the enactments and what the patient feels, and assuming responsibility for such. He thereby creates an additional form of the third, to wit a "moral thirdness", which produces a "connection to a larger principle of necessity, rightness, or goodness" (2004, p. 26).

Therapeutic action rests on specific values, on tolerance for one's own uncertainty, humility and compassion. These enable the analyst to tolerate the symmetrical relationship into which he may have got with his patient. For Benjamin they form "the basis of a democratic or egalitarian view of the psychoanalytic process" (2004, 34). On this basis, analyst and analysand both create a common third in that they feel obligated to these values, surrender to them, giving rise to a dialogical relationship that allows them to reflect with one another on their interactions. These values and this form of a moral thirdness are not conveyed to the individual socially from the outside but founded in the essence of intersubjectivity itself and arise from the amenability to reciprocal recognition. Yet mutual recognition is not some once-acquired capacity or achievement, but an intersubjectively brokered dynamic process. The mental space of the moral third can repeatedly fail and pass into the complementary structure of relationships.

Although Benjamin anchors intersubjectivity and the capacity for mutual recognition in the development process itself, the extent to which moral thirdness involves purely psychological capabilities that arise from the experience of intersubjectivity itself or the extent to which moral thirdness involves values that form a normative basis for democratic societies conveyed in the socialization process nevertheless remains open. For Benjamin such a conception of the analytical relationship is part of a larger intersubjective project to which both feminism and psychoanalysis have contributed. She would like to liberate the analytical relationship from the snare of subject-object thinking - the analyst being the knowing subject, the analysand the known object.

Above all, the present debate on intersubjectivity centres around North America. Relational psychoanalysis plays an important part in it. From a North American perspective it is easy to overlook the fact that conceptions of intersubjectivity have already evolved in the other psychoanalytical cultural spaces earlier on. There are many reasons for them having been brought hardly or not at all to the awareness of the English-speaking world, one of them being the language barrier. I shall address these conceptions in the following chapters.

Precursors to Intersubjectivism in German-Language Psychoanalysis

Even during the 1950s and 1960s of the last century, psychoanalytical intersubjectivity theories were widespread in the German-language region. They were based on the 'socio-ontological' (Theunissen, 1977) projections of the early 20th century philosophy that opposed the thinking of Neo-Kantianism and the subject-philosophy of German Idealism based strictly on the assumption that there is no bare subject without world, no isolated ego without the others. For Edmund Husserl, the individual consciousness is always intentionally related to an other, or more generally to the concrete life-world. The ego can only recognize itself on the detour via recognition of the other as an alter ego. Ego and world are constituted intersubjectively, and within the framework of his transcendental-phenomenological intersubjectivity theory, Husserl is the first to introduce the concept of intersubjectivity into philosophy. In the case of Martin Heidegger, existence is intrinsically a being-with. Man experiences his being-in-the-world as a being-with-others. He is not some monadic subjectivity that had only to empathize with the other at some later stage. As the main proponent of a philosophy of dialogue, Martin Buber (1923, 1954) posits the 'between' as a concept of origin in lieu of an original, philosophically isolated ego: the reciprocity of the direct relationship is an I-Thou relationship, which outstrips all means-end relationships and instrumental relationship structures (the I-it relationship). Buber describes this 'between' as a phenomenology of the encounter. I and Thou bring about the encounter not as ready-made entities, both originating only with the pure event of the encounter. It is elevated to the true subject as 'Thou-I'.

For psychotherapy Ludwig Binswanger was an important mediator of the socio-ontological philosophical projections.[4] For Binswanger psychology sets off down the wrong track when it tries to capture the true nomological context of mental experiences. Freudian psychoanalysis is stationed along this route, he says, if it has only 'homo natura' in view. The subject of psychological investigation can only be the context of meaning provided by the individual's world-projection. Within his horizons conscious or unconscious experience and behaviour, respectively, must be explicated hermeneutically. Although Binswanger remained forever linked to Freud, he trod his own path scientifically: that of a phenomenological anthropology and hermeneutics. He no longer searched for unconscious motives of experience but seeks to comprehend the individual world-projection as a modification of an ontological structural totality of existence. For him the "cancer of all psychology" (1942, p. 234) lies in the subject-object split. 'Being in-the-world' is also always called a 'being-with' or 'with-world' *[Mitwelt]*, i.e. relating to other people. Existence, then, is already always composed intersubjectively. Prompted by the dialogical thinking of Buber

[4]Binswanger's works are available in German in a four-volume edition, in English in an anthology (1963): Being-in-the-World: Selected Papers of Ludwig Binswanger. Cf. also Freud-Binswanger-Briefwechsel [Correspondence] (Freud and Binswanger, 1992), Theunissen (1977), Herzog and Braun (1993), Frie (2002, 2003).

and in opposition to Heidegger, Binswanger conceptualizes the with-world-liness of the other as an I-Thou relationship and operates on the basis of a fundamental 'we-hood' of the person, which is embodied in the encounter of I and you. 1942 sees the appearance of his key work *Grundformen und Erkenntnis menschlichen Daseins* [Basic forms and perception of human being-in-the-world], in which Binswanger makes an even more radical assumption than Buber about the 'between'. *Per se*, existence already has the nature of the encounter, and 'I and Thou' therefore already belong to the ontological constitution. Duality has a constitutive primacy, love being the highest and most original fashioning of this duality (Binswanger, 1942, p. 73).

Ontologically, the dual we-hood is superordinate to the duality of I and Thou. In his libido theory, it is argued, Freud proceeds ontogenetically, yet fails to take into account the phenomenological reality of love, which as a structural aspect

of existence plays a central role in the domain of the interhuman field (Frie, 2002). The “I-Thou-ness” is a primordial fact of existence. Through the encounter as a structural aspect of existence, the individual himself is “we-ly” constituted. Hegel's dialectic with the mutual recognition of self and other is, for Binswanger, a special form of his concept of love (Binswanger, 1942, p. 390). For Theunissen (1977) Binswanger's seminal work is the most radical attempt at an ontology of the ‘between’ and an innovative approach within the works on the social ontology of the 20th century. Yet given the complex and overcluttered composition, it is not easy to absorb.

During the 1950s, together with approaches to philosophical anthropology, this I-Thou philosophy of Buber and Binswanger's philosophy of We-hood had a huge influence on depth psychology in Germany. Above all, the concept of the encounter gained a foothold in theory formation - admittedly not in the radicality of the Binswangerian conception, but rather in the toned-down version, in which, through the encounter, the individual ego is drawn into a dialogical individuation process. *Heilung aus der Begegnung* [Healing through Meeting] (Trüb, 1951) was pivotal. For Felix Schottlaender (1952) the analyst cannot be an objective mirror for the patient, for in so doing he represents only “emotionally frigid natural science” (Schottlaender (1952), 502). If we take the suffering person as an ‘object of knowledge’ only, we are failing him. The patient must become a partner and an equal-ranking counterpart. During treatment, transference develops; but in addition to it and out of that transference also develops an existential encounter. The analyst must get into communicative contact with the patient's world in order to understand his world-projection and manner of existence. That can only succeed in a genuine encounter that transcends the transference/countertransference dynamic. The language of the encounter is intentional and targets the other as a ‘challenge’: in the process, the immediacy of the encounter constellates the patient as a fellow-human You. In this respect the encounter between analyst and patient represents a stand-alone construct, a communicative novelty. Transference and encounter are both necessary if psychotherapy is to succeed. The analyst must help the patient relinquish his infantile demands through his analysis of the transference, so that he can advance

towards an unconditional acknowledgement of reality and a genuine relationship. The aim of the treatment consists of opening up a genuine You-view and a devotion to the world.

All these approaches emphasize the fundamental importance of intersubjectivity in human and therapeutic relationships. Encounter is the concept that seeks to map the new and transforming relationship experiences onto the notion. The immediate and direct, i.e. the abrupt and unmediated, structure of the experience in the act of the encounter thus occupies a central position. Yet in these clinical theories, despite its experience-related anthropological approach, the real you was just as eroded as the factuality of the relationship. The empirical-clinical relationship constellations could not be aptly described. Ultimately, encounter became a metaphysical, transcendental fact, and one religiously substantiated by several of these theories. And yet, in the concept of encounter of that time, a problem that takes on all intersubjectivity theories in psychoanalysis becomes discernible. A central characteristic of the encounter is its immediacy, an intersubjectively created experience which as a pure occurrence has a present nature. In the philosophical concepts of encounter it embodies itself in its purest phenomenal form in watching and being watched, in loving and being loved, and in dialogical keeping silent. Admittedly, this immediacy can become more or less present, psychologically, as a present experience, but inherent in it is the tendency to be subsequently conveyed psychologically through language and through integration into already existing representations.

In Germany this form of anthropological-philosophically founded psychoanalytical theory formation was historically superseded by the psychoanalytical ego-psychology which streamed in from the Anglo-American area from the mid-1950s. Against the backdrop of a natural-scientific understanding of psychoanalysis, the concept of the encounter was attacked as too profound and unfathomable (Scheunert, 1959). The patient, it contended, has to be made the object by the analyst's position as a mirror for the patient and by the use of countertransference, as a result of which objective recognition is first enabled and both -analyst and analysand - are prevented from being immersed in an “illusory exuberance of emotions” (Scheunert, 1959, 582).

The Intersubjective Concept of the Scene (Hermann Argelander)

Intersubjective approaches in Germany enjoyed a second heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. In the German psychoanalysis of that period epistemologically and scientifically methodical hermeneutic thinking had gained acceptance, fuelled above all by Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer (1960) describes intersubjective understanding as a hermeneutic experience, since the intersubjective relationship of I and Other evolves with the aid of the inherent dialogical structure of question and answer. The encounter with the other as a 'You' begins with something appealing to us. For Gadamer understanding is less of a reflexive act of acquiring something alien, something non-understood; rather, understanding

comes about in the encounter of I and You, and in the final analysis is made possible only if the I is capable of opening up to the You as a constant source for refuting its own presuppositions. Accordingly, true intersubjectivity consists of reciprocal receptiveness to one another.

Hermann Argelander (1968, 1970a, b, 1974)[5] conceptualizes his psychoanalytical hermeneutics as "scenic understanding".[6] Understanding is invariably dialogical in nature. Like Gadamer, Argelander assumes that the intersubjective relationship of I and Other is structured as question and answer. In order to understand an other's experience and behaviour, i.e. to work out a context of meaning, the question answered by the thing to be understood has first to be re-discovered. The analyst must expose himself to the patient directly and thus lay himself open to questioning. The analyst is aided in his understanding of his perceptions and reactions by his knowledge of the infantile world as that of the matrix in which the unconscious structures have formed. They urge expression in the patient and manifest themselves in the conversational situation with the analyst. "The situation itself assumes a value of its own as an informational tool because it lends the course of the conversation a significance of its own" (1970b, p. 33). Argelander ascribes to the ego a "scenic function" through which an infantile unconscious conflict constellation is dovetailed into the relevant intersubjective situation with the analyst. In the process the old unconscious constellation shape-shifts, following general principles of Gestalt psychology. As in a creative act, something new is brought forth, not simply a reiteration of the old. Nor can the sense of the scene be inferred from the succession of the topics; rather, they are structural components of a dynamic process-gestalt that must first unfold scenically between analyst and patient in order to be comprehensible. The pregnant closure of the scene to a texture of meaning may be accelerated by the gradually emerging preconception of the analyst but the understanding of the scene comes about as suddenly and evidently dawning.

Consequently, for Argelander, intersubjectivity is both a non-mediated happening that takes place directly and also a reflexive act of understanding the other. The scene is an intersubjective event, the meaning of which is always tied to both partners and cannot be divorced from them. Only in the situatively bound scenic understanding do transference reactions have their sense-conveying significance. For Argelander, speech communication, which unfolds scenically, is to the fore. Some ten years later Rolf Klüwer (1983) then expanded the scenic understanding through his concept of the action dialogue to enactment phenomena.[7]

[5]Argelander's 1970a work has been published (2013) in English as 'The scenic function of the ego and its role in symptom and character formation' in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis with an introduction by Werner Bohleber and a discussion by Leon Balter. [6]Translator's note: It should perhaps be borne in mind here that the German word 'Szene' and related adjective 'szenisch' also mean 'stage' and 'stage related/staged' rather than 'scenic' in the conventional English sense, but I have used the translation adopted in the literature. [7]For reasons of space I cannot go into Alfred Lorenzer's conception of the scene and the scenic interaction forms. I have detailed them in Bohleber (2010).

Intersubjectivity as a Dynamic Field: The Field Conceptions of Madeleine and Willy Baranger and of Antonino Ferro

Field theories present themselves for the conception of intersubjective experiences. A 'field' is defined through forces that lend a particular dynamic nature to the surrounding space. The individual's behaviour is a function of the intersubjective field he is part of. It always reacts as a dynamic whole.

Since the 1960s William and Madeleine Baranger have been developing a concept of their own for a field theory of the analytical situation.[8] Their 'bi-personal field' (later replaced by 'intersubjective field') is a gestalt-theoretical concept which they had taken over from Kurt Lewin and Maurice Merleau Ponty, the latter having transposed it from a natural-scientific to a phenomenological frame of reference. Furthermore, they founded their field theory on Kleinian concepts of projective identification and on Bion's basic assumptions. It is a radical intersubjective theory which, conceptually, disregards both individuals as single people. They no longer emerge directly as acting persons. The object of investigation is solely the field, the dynamics and power of which are determined by an underlying unconscious fantasy.

This bi-personal unconscious fantasy is neither the sum nor any other combination of the individual fantasies. "It is something created *between* the two … something radically different from what each of them is separately" (2008, p. 806, italics in the original). Nor does it have any continued existence outside of the field situation. The basic mechanism that produces the unconscious fantasy is projective identification, which provides the patient with the possibility of structuring his fantasy of the field. In the process, reaction patterns from the past can be brought back up to date. The flexibility peculiar to the field allows it to be neither literal nor stereotyped repetitions. The old patterns are dovetailed into the new and vivid context of the dynamic field by analyst and patient.[9] While the patient appears to be immersed in this field, the analyst is only partially so. He can largely keep his ego clear of it: he is a participant observer. The two Barangers talk about the ambiguity of the analytical situation and the field, which apart from a spatial dimension also has a temporal one and includes both present and past as well as future, though precisely in an ambiguous version. As a result, however, that which has passed remains vague, and within the field it does not leave this composedness; because in order to be able to recognize a pattern as something past and as its reactivation, analyst and analysand would have to leave the dynamics of the intersubjective field and cross over to an intrapsychic view.

Antonino Ferro (1999, 2005) has developed his own concept of the 'bi-personal field' or 'analytical field' (Ferro and Basile, 2009), which draws on the Barangerian conception. In the analytical field the participants'

[8]Their main paper is reprinted in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis 89, 2008, with introductions by Beatriz de Leon de Bernardi and John Churcher. [9]There is an evident similarity here with Argelander's concept of the scene.

'subjective fields' converge to give rise to a new entity, which is more than the sum of the two individual fields. Ferro highlights the similarity of his conception to the relational theories, but stresses the technical specificity of his field theory because it is the first theory to break with the idea that, during the analytical session, work must only be done in the here-and-now and exclusively on transference interpretations. Ferro understands the analytical field as a new structure, as a kind of intermediary space in which scenes and characters are awoken to life and find their embodiment. The session's characters are the fruit of mental operations performed by analyst and patient. They reflect the mental functioning of both. Ferro connects the field concept with Bion's thinking, above all with alpha-function and with the concept of 'waking dream thought', as well as concepts of Italian narratology. The field is a "space-time context, aiming to foster the narration of the stories that represent 'alphabetization' of the proto-emotions within the couple" (Ferro, 2005, p. 94). All scenes and characters are a function of the field. They are distinctly assignable to neither the analysand nor the analyst as author. "It is the field itself that is continually dreamt and re-dreamt" (Ferro, 2011, p. 167).

Ferro (2005) tries to solve the problem of how to conceptualize determination of the psyche through the past by adding to the present horizontal field, which is vivid in the here-and-now, a vertical field that includes a transgenerational and hence a temporal dimension. But in this attempt to incorporate time, Ferro overstretches the field metaphor. Although the time dimension does render the characters three-dimensional, it simultaneously forces the analyst to give individually structured transference interpretations, thus abandoning the field conceptually.

All field theories are confined to the present dynamic event, and all events are a function of the field and generated by an intersubjective matrix. Past and history are separated from it by a gap, which is conceptually insuperable. Civitarese (2008) sees the danger of the self-referentiality of field theories. Interpretation is saddled by him with the task of bridging that gap as an 'operator of exchanges': "Interpretation allows all the knowledge, the maps and the histories conceived in the consulting room to be exportable into the real and historical world or into the inner world of the patient" (2008, p. 94).

All intersubjective theories have similar difficulties integrating the unconscious and the past into their horizontal modellings of intersubjectivity. Unlike Freud, with his vertically structured metaphorical space-time model of the psychic apparatus, nearly all intersubjective theory approaches attempt to develop a horizontal conception of the unconscious. They consider it based on relational contexts and, unlike a past unconscious, for instance, talk of a relational or a two-person unconscious or an interpersonal unconscious.[10]

[10] I am unable to discuss this problem in any more detail here; it has called for a work of its own.

A Bionian Conception of Intersubjectivity (Lawrence Brown)[11]

As has already become clear from the account of Ogden's and Ferro's conception of the intersubjective, Bion's concepts - above all that of projective identification, of container/contained and dreaming-for-two - can be turned to advantage for understanding an intersubjective constitutionalized structure of human relations in general and the analytical relationship in particular. Just recently, Lawrence Brown presented an interesting attempt at an integrative model of intersubjectivity, drawing particularly on Bion's conceptual thinking. Brown positions himself in a lengthy genealogical line, starting from Freud's unconscious communication between analyst and analysand, through Isakower's analysing instrument to the development of psychoanalysis in the South American River Plate Region, which then leads him to Ferro, who has linked the Barangerian conception to Bion's theory of transformations. Brown would like to carry on this line, drawing on Bion's concepts in particular. He defines intersubjectivity as "largely an unconscious process of communication and meaning making between the two intrapsychic worlds of the patient and the analyst that results in changes between, and within, each member of the analytic pair" (Brown, 2011, p. 109). Brown presents a process model. For him, above all, it is about the paths along which, and the intrapsychic mechanisms with which, the intersubjective exchange processes are effected. Above all communication, which takes place unconsciously, forms the "deep wellspring of intersubjectivity" and enables creative co-construction within the analytical dyad. The communicative process takes place by means of projective identification. Brown uses this concept in Bion's conceptualization as a communicative process between mother and child or, respectively, analyst and analysand. However, since, from an intersubjective point of view, the concept of projective identification still focuses too much on the mental contents of the child, having been contained by the mother and returned in a transformed state, Brown supplements it with Grotstein's concept of 'projective transidentification', in order to appropriately record the bi-personal character of this intersubjective encounter: "The projecting subject *and* the object of projection constitute *two separate self-activating systems*, and the interpersonal process should consequently be renamed *'projective transidentification'* to designate its unique transpersonal mode so as to contrast it with the unconscious phantasy of intrapsychic projective identification proper" (Grotstein, cited in Brown, 2011, p. 111, italics used in the original). In the analyst the projection finds indications, analogous matching elements. At first, though, they are still

passing through a process of transformation in order to become an experience that can be experienced by the analyst.

Brown describes this transformation with the aid of Bion's alpha function and his container/contained concept. Although Bion terms the conception of the contained/container relationship ‘commensal’, for Brown it remains, from a more sharply formulated intersubjective perspective, still too much

[11]Brown works in the USA und hence belongs in the North American context, but the concepts he develops would seem to suggest classifying him here.

of a one-sided process, with the emphasis on what the mother does for the child. Brown finds in Bion's late writings - mentioned implicitly rather than explicitly - another, more apt ‘sexual/pro- or co-creative paradigm’, in which Bion speaks of analytic intercourse, out of which both analyst and analysand can give birth to a new idea. For Brown, such a model is better suited, if anything, to an interaction between mother and child, resulting in growth of both partners and in creation of new meaning. So thinking becomes a relational process, an internalized “thinking couple” (p. 151). In the analytic treatment, “there is a constant unconscious interactional process between the linked Alpha functions of the analysand and analyst by which meaning is constantly being created and expanded that, when treatment is going well, results in the mutual growth of the container/contained” (Brown, 2011, p. 106).

It struck Brown himself that, so far, the actual intersubjective has thus not been conceptually summed up as that which is distinguished from the two actors and their psychological processes. It must be more than the “linked alpha functions” or the fact that analyst and analysand alike “dream a reciprocal dream together” (p. 121). But in the conception of the intersubjective Brown gets no further than the “conjoint dream” (p. 123) or “joint narrative” as a shared unconscious fantasy of the analytic couple, or than the shared constructive narrative. He understands both as “the embodiment of a third area of experience, neither the analysand nor the analyst, but an ‘off-spring’ with its own vibrancy” (p. 74). The joint narrative is the intersubjectively created product, but not the intersubjective proper. In Brown's case it is embodied in the “vibrancy” as a characteristic of the third area.

Intersubjectivity and Alterity in French Psychoanalysis

Many intersubjectivity conceptions of predominantly North-American provenance lack an adequate understanding of the structural position of the Other in the intersubjective relationship. The phenomenological dialectics of the self and the other anticipated in the philosophy of Continental Europe feeds many of the more recent psychoanalytical conceptions, with the concept of ‘alterity’ (‘otherness’) having been further refined in French psychoanalysis in particular. As will be known, Jacques Lacan - with recourse to Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and structural linguistics - introduced the concept of the Other into psychoanalysis. He conceived of the I as being split in itself from the outset. According to Lacan, during the ‘mirror stage’, the child can only encounter itself in itself as an other in imaginary form. This imaginary intersubjectivity, more or less rooted in the moment of mirroring, requires entry into the symbolic order of the language. It is the field of the Other in which the person must materialize. The subject is subjected to the desire of the other, who is however an inadequate representative of the big Other.

André Green (1999, 2000) stresses the heterogeneity inherent in man that is founded in the alterity of the Other. There is no subject *per se*; one becomes a subject only through an Other. Green took over the notion of the Other from Lacan, but connects it to the psychoanalytical object concept and speaks of the Other as the “similar other”: “another person who is similar

enough to be able to identify with him or her and thus be of assistance to that person in his or her *hilflosigkeit* [helplessness]" (Green, 2000, p. 19, italics used in the original). Ultimately, alterity (as the otherness of the other) is not resolvable. In his function as the one who is the Other to the other, the other never works out exactly. Moreover, he remains an other not determined by it. Green extends the concept of alterity even further. Because the subject is related to the drive as something non-linguistic, it is also itself an other. The drive stems from the physical sphere and as such constitutes a relationship that cannot be quantified into language and discursivity. Drive promotes dependence from another (as the object of the drive) who responds to the drive but can never quite fulfil it. The subject has to work off this double, intersubjective and intrapsychic alienation on a lifelong basis.[12]

For Green the essence of alterity can only be properly understood through psychoanalysis and provision of the analytical situation. With the method of free association and the evolution of transference, the meaning of alterity becomes comprehensible in empirical-clinical terms. Through it, "the return to oneself by means of a detour via the other" (Green, 2000, p. 19) appears attainable. "Intersubjectivity becomes the mediation necessary for gaining awareness of the intrapsychic" (Green, 2000, p. 21). Green would like to do away with the unproductive polarization between intrapsychic and intersubjective. Both are always in play and both cannot be seen in their own right; both positions are already always conveyed by the other pole. Thus intersubjectivity unfolds in the "intertwining of the internal worlds of the two partners of the analytic couple" (2000, p. 2). For him the intersubjective proper consists of the "property of creating an added value of meaning compared with the signification this acquires for each of the partners" (2000, p. 22). Green leaves it there with such vague determination of the intersubjective. How the surplus of meaning comes about and what psychological quality it has, remains open. This much can be inferred, though, that it must be a kind of new direct experience as the result of the encounter by both partners.

A highly complex intersubjective theory of the role of the Other in its meaning for the subjectification of the person has been devised by Rene Kaës (2007). It is the fruit of many years of working with groups. In order to formulate the subjectivation of the person, he says, psychoanalysis falls short if it confines itself only to the formation of internal object relations through the process of identification. Identifications must be supplemented and completed through processes of linking, in which the other has to be encountered in his concreteness and cannot be reduced to the internal world as an object. Kaës regrets that psychoanalysis has not already turned to the concept of intersubjectivity earlier. He sees this as being due to its concern that the centrality of the intrapsychic world was able to be abandoned and psychoanalysis allowed to lapse into sheer interactionism. For Kaës intersubjectivity is the dynamic structure of the psychic space between two or several subjects. It is a common, joint, shared and differentiated space in which a 'psychic groupality' arises. The group (the couple, family, a group

[12]I cannot go into detail here about Jean Laplanche's conception of an 'anthropological basic situation', which also generates a double alterity (Laplanche, 1988, 1992).

or an institution) imposes the major prohibitions and obligations on its subjects in order to establish and maintain its own order. This is the subject's necessary intersubjective situation. It stamps the formation, agencies, and processes of the psychic apparatus, and consequently the unconscious, with specific contents and modes of functioning. The unconscious alliances are the base and the cement of the psychic reality that links us to one another. In order to become an individual subject he has to extricate himself from these links to others and from unconscious alliances that keep him in subjection to the effects of the unconscious but also structure him. This "process of subjectivation makes it possible to become an 'I' who can think about his place within a 'We'" (2007, p. 236). For Kaës subjectivity has a "paradoxical nature" as both a property of individuals and inseparable from membership in a group (Kirshner, 2009, p. 1005). "We cannot *not* be in intersubjectivity" (Kaës, 2007, p. 7, italics used in the original).

In his theory of linking Kaës also refers to a concept of the Argentinian analyst Pichon-Rivière, whose thinking is also one of the sources of Berenstein and Puget's link theory, which nevertheless differs from Kaës's link conception.

Intersubjectivity as Experience of Alienness of the other (Isidor Berenstein and Janine Puget)

The 1950s saw Pichon-Rivière introduce the concept of the 'vinculo' [link] into psychoanalysis.[13] Isidor Berenstein (2001) and Janine Puget (2004) also obtained impetus for their concept of the 'link' from their therapeutic experiences with couples and family analysis, dealing with the basic question of how we can conceptualize perceptions of the other that are not confined to projective identifications and repetitions or actualizations of representations already available (philosophy of the re-encounter) but relate to experiences that take as their object current events and links to others, having no precursor in the individual history (philosophy of the encounter). For the authors the crux is to find an appropriate theory for conceptualizing the immediacy of the encounter, and the experience of otherness taking place within it. Thus they fall back on the philosophy of Hegel, Husserl and above all Levinas who, like no other philosopher, has described the new that occurs when we expose ourselves to the other as the 'absolute Other', the alienness of which is the part of it that exceeds the representation of the other in ourselves and remains unavailable.

Berenstein and Puget describe a subject-object relationship (singularity of the 'one'), in which the desire of the ego is projected onto the object; this relationship is ego-centred and in the analytical relationship articulates itself as transference of internal object relations. They differentiate between that and the 'link' as a subject-subject relationship (singularity of the 'two'), in which the other appears as an Other, not as an object. That is to say, the encounter between the two of them has an innovative substance,

[13]There is no English translation of his works. A short overview of his concept will be found in Scharff and Scharff (2011).

which hinges on the otherness of the other and is not already represented as something available in the inner world of the subject. Berenstein and Puget conceptualize this kind of relationship as a link. Encounter is a relationship of presence, first experienced as fleeting immediacy, then leading to a "new inscription of the other" which has no inner precursors. The link is defined as "an unconscious structure joining two or more subjects, whom it determines on the basis of a relationship of presence" (Berenstein, 2001, p. 143). For the subject the otherness of the other represents something alien, inaccessible and new, and as such inflicts a narcissistic wound. If the encounter and the otherness, i.e. the alienness of the other as experience, are avoided, the relationship remains on the level of a represented object relationship and the specificity of the other as subject is obliterated. In this sense - a constitutive paradox from the authors' point of view - the subject not only precedes the relationship but is also created by the encounter. Both dimensions of the representation and the presentation intermingle and coexist in the analytical treatment just like the analyst as 'object-analyst' and as 'subject-analyst' (Puget, 2004).

This conception of intersubjectivity differs essentially from conceptions centring on mutual recognition. It is not the motive power behind the relationship but the encounter with the alienness of the other that engenders a subject-bursting immediacy of new experience. It is the "engine of the link" (Berenstein, 2001, p. 146).

Several Common Problems of Intersubjective Theories in Psychoanalysis

Concept Transfer from Philosophy and Gestalt Psychology

Within psychoanalytical theory discussion, the last 20 years have increasingly seen aspects of the analytical relationship raised that could no longer be accommodated under the guiding concepts of transference and countertransference. I shall single out two passages from a panel report that had been formulated in the context of the enactment discussion. Analytical treatment not giving rise to any enactments might lead to:

> *their absence being understood as a signal to the analyst that true engagement with the patient is not occurring… It has become evident that many implicit communications occur between analyst and patient and have therapeutic effect, often without being explicitly verbalized.*
>
> *(Chused, in Evans, 2008, panel report, p. 565)*

Or in the same panel report:

> *Boesky stressed that if the analyst does not unintentionally become emotionally involved, the analysis will not reach a successful conclusion. Instances of the analyst's nonverbal, 'unwitting complicity' add to the 'affective immediacy of the dynamically active transference' and are essential to an effective analytic process.*
>
> *(Evans, 2008, p. 567)*

Events in the analytical framework of events are named here, such as “true engagement” “implicit communications”, which have a therapeutic effect. It is about “becoming unintentionally emotionally involved” and about the “unwitting complicity” of the analyst. What such descriptions, and others, have in common is that they attempt to give voice to phenomena, and hence to the concept, which could not be suitably formulated in psychoanalytical thinking with its concepts to date. This gap was increasingly filled by the concept of intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity, however, is no genuine psychoanalytical concept and fits into neither the intrapsychic frame of reference nor that of the object relations. For the most part the concept was transferred from philosophical approaches dealing with a phenomenology and ontology of human relationships. The framework for the intersubjective phenomena was then formed by a subject-subject relationship, which was compatible with neither an intrapsychic nor an object-relation-theoretical inventory of concepts. Either the concepts were adapted or else new ones introduced to conceptualize the corresponding phenomena in analytical terms. Hence terms like enactment, intersubjective systems, mutual recognition, analytic third, subjugating third, moral third, encounter, moments of meeting, bi-personal field, the Other and linkage emerged. This conceptual theory transfer and the problems that arise when transferring concepts from a transcendental philosophical or ontological ‘theory world’ into a psychological one thus often became merely insufficient, methodologically or epistemologically, or were not even reflected at all. So the concept of recognition may have spread far and wide, but I doubt that it was integrated into psychoanalytical thinking in its Hegelian embodiment. But what exactly is meant by the term, psychoanalytically? I have already alluded to the problems that arise for the integration of the past and for the conception of the unconscious in an intersubjective paradigm. At bottom, with most of these intersubjective approaches, it is about a new metapsychological groundwork of psychoanalysis, aimed at a psychoanalytical theory of intersubjective subjectification. There is here a “backlog demand” for discussion of the difficulties arising, though there is no need to adopt such a radical approach as Green, who considers a phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity as subject-subject relationship and “cumbersome Freudian theory” mutually exclusive (2000, p. 28).

New Experience and the Immediacy of Intersubjective Encounter

In the attempt to understand analytical treatment not only as repetition and resolution of old relationship patterns but also to comprehend it as a place in which new experience takes place, I see a chief concern of the intersubjective projection

theories in psychoanalysis. Thus the theories of the ‘third’ conceptualize a form of relationship of mutual recognition through which the new subjectivity is enabled (Benjamin, Ogden). In models describing intersubjectivity as an encounter with the Other, the other on account of his otherness never tallies exactly in his function that he has for the subject in the relationship, but always harbours a surplus of meaning because he

remains a non-mediated other (Green, Laplanche, Kaës). Theories that understand intersubjectivity as the encounter of two subjects conceptualize the new, above all, as the immediacy of the personal encounter in which the dialogical individuation of the subject comes about (Binswanger, Schottlaender). The encounter of subject and other as present experience has an innovative nature and “generates a subject which supplements the subject constituted in infancy” (Berenstein, 2001, p. 147; Puget).

Intersubjectivity as experience is constantly located on the horizontal plane of a here-and-now relationship. Theories of the third as well as field theories use a spatial metaphor for their description. Here the intersubjective is understood as something “between” the two subjects, similar to Winnicott's transitional space. The distance between the subjects is bridged by a shared mental space. Conversely, the theories that conceptualize the intersubjective as an immediate non-mediated encounter work within a time metaphor. Their concept of time is arranged vertically to continuous, horizontal-running time. The metaphor of the moment comes closest to the experience of immediacy. Stern (2004) talks about both subjects in the ‘present moment’ absorbing an experience simultaneously. As a result of this temporal connection, the subjects become part of one and the same structure.

Intersubjective Developmental Processes as Model

At the behavioural micro-level, the way in which the self itself evolves out of the interaction with the mother while remaining bound up in the interactive exchange was borne out by the developmental research in increasingly differentiated terms. For the child, discovery of the own self is a dialectic of own self-exploration and communal sharing with the primary object. Fonagy and Target (2007, p. 920) speak of a “joining of minds”, a shared dyadic consciousness promoted by the mechanism of eye contact initialized in evolution.

The general significance of intersubjectivity for the formation of the self is undisputed in the research. Dissension prevails as to how primary this intersubjectivity is. Above all, the discovery of the mirror neurons as well as research into early imitation, which actually sets in immediately after birth, have boosted the opinion that intersubjectivity is an innate capability. The scientific dispute between the adherents of a primary intersubjectivity (Braten, 2009; Stern, 2004; Trevarthen, 1979, *et al.*) and other developmental researchers like Gergely and Unoka (2008), for whom intersubjectivity is not an innate capacity but a learning process mediated by the mother, seems to me not yet to have been resolved. Both sides adduce weighty arguments in their favour.

From the results of the empirical developmental research several researchers like Beebe and Lachmann (2002) and Stern (2004) have drawn far-reaching inferences for psychoanalytical theory and therapeutic technique. In principle, it should be noted that theories of intersubjectivity that have recourse to early development are at risk of mixing up genesis and validity. What has come about in the development of the individual self and its

structures intersubjectively and interactively need not remain just as intersubjectively integrated in the adult. A systems-theory interaction model that may be appropriate for describing action regulations and expectation patterns during infancy, for example, is not necessarily of value in the same way when describing therapeutic interactions and

verbal exchange. There is much here that takes the form of inferences that are not covered. Although we now know from developmental research that self-definition and relatedness are not opposites but interdependent developmental forces, the unilateral emphasis given to intersubjective connectivity invariably leads to the theoretical and clinical neglect of difference, independence and autonomy.

Some Difficulties of Theories on Intersubjectivity in Relation to the Corpus of Contemporary Psychoanalytical Knowledge

The potential disappearance of triangulating reality. How can the partners in the therapeutic dialogue be sure that their jointly co-constructed meanings are valid and do not represent a folie à deux? In conjunction with this question we come across the concept of reality that is already always presupposed in the analytical situation and to which both partners implicitly relate in order to even be able to make themselves understood. Marcia Cavell (1998) refers here to the existence of a language community anchored in the reality of the social world which both partners belong to and implicitly emanate from. For Thomas Bedorf (2003) there is an impending danger of fusing for a dyad conceived of as a dual union. Only the third[14] in a structurally conceived triad opens up something beyond the immediacy of the here-and-now of the encounter. Intersubjectivity never succeeds in twos. The third is already always a person co-present as one excluded from it (as per Green also, 1975). In addition, the third forms that place in the between of the dyadic relationship to which a conflict between self and other articulates itself, and in as much also becomes the disruptive element that forces the dual system to constantly new exchange (Bedorf, 2003, p. 363).

The intersubjective unassailable remainder: Death drive, negativity and destructivity. In many intersubjective theories, human development appears to enact itself with relative freedom from conflict. The formation of subjective identity is directly connected with social or interpersonal recognition. For all that, the insight of psychoanalysis into the social nonconformism of the person whose drive-based desires and unconscious fantasies can never be fully integrated into an individual and social identity gets lost in the view of many critics. The phenomena of destructivity, death drive and narcissistic omnipotence lead to negation of an intersubjective shared reality or to withdrawal from it. Here we come across an intersubjective, not entirely integrable or resolvable ‘remainder’, which is particularly important psychoanalytically in the confrontation with the intersubjective theories. Green (1999) formulates this withdrawal as the ‘work of the negative’.

[14]This third should not be confused with the third as an intersubjective form of relationship.

Negative narcissism does not involve any ego-investment that seeks unity with the object; instead, it seeks a zero level in the relationship in order to reach such a solution to problems arising from such destructive aspirations.

Intersubjectivity and the autonomous subject. The thinking that has become customary in the intersubjective paradigm is predicated on a holistically structured subject and thus obfuscates the differentiated psychodynamics allowed for by the structural theory of psychoanalysis. More especially, the more radical intersubjective theories involve a mounting risk of watering down the individual subject conceptually and ultimately resolving, or dissolving, it in the intersubjective context. In order not to reach an untenable position of amalgamation and fusion, theoretically, they require complementing by difference and distinctness in the intersubjective relationship (as per Aron also, 1996), though that does entail conceptual difficulties for these theories. This critical objection is not intended to make a case for a solipsistically acting subject, but a subject altogether capable of grappling with its intersubjective having-become, in an internal dialogue and reflexively, and thereby attaining a certain degree of freedom from integration into the intersubjectively structured relational world.

Conclusion

Gathered under the generic heading of ‘intersubjectivism’ are a raft of heterogeneous psychoanalytical conceptions additionally characterized by different cultural areas. ‘Dialogue’, ‘encounter’, ‘mutuality’, ‘spontaneity’ are concepts that currently not only exert a special fascination for theoreticians but are also in tune with modern social consciousness. From the intersubjective encounter something new can spring, something not predetermined by ingrained, experience-guided patterns of transference and countertransference, and in that respect it takes on creative potency. Conceptualizing the new that can arise between the two analytical partners is precisely where the communality of the various intersubjectivity theories lies, it seems to me. Nonetheless, they do not allow of mutual integration; at most, they can be summarized into different groups:

The intersubjective here is the dynamic space between the subjects. They remain intact as independent and relatively autonomous players. The intersubjective viewpoint is connected with an intrapsychic one. The intersubjective is a subaspect of the pair's overall interaction record, e.g. in the enactment.

In the theories of self and other, the other is first and foremost the dynamic centre or the player that enables the subject to come to terms with himself and undergo change through the experience of his otherness. In the concept of mutuality this pregnant transcendental-philosophically or ontologically articulated difference would resolve itself.

In this group the intersubjective is the base unit or else the player, most far-reachingly in field theories and dynamic systems theory. To put it in slightly overstated terms, they reduce the subject to the contingent effect

of contexts. This is also where the theories of the third and other intersubjective encounter theories belong, because it is only mutual recognition, the encounter or the mutual creation of the third that enables the experience of being-a-subject or of a dialogical individuation.

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