

## CHAPTER 11

## Beyond Alterity: The Path to Gratitude

MARIE T. HOFFMAN

Everything flows, but the river comes from a source every time. It takes matter with it from the regions through which it has run, this colours its waters for a long time. Equally for that new form there are remnants of an older one, there is no absolute cut between today and yesterday. There is no totally new work.

—Bloch (2005, p. 35)

These words by Ernst Bloch serve to frame this chapter, for I will be culling from ancient sources that have “coloured” the waters of psychoanalysis since its inception. In my previous writing, I broadly explored the historic interpenetration of both Judaic and Christian narratives into the stream of psychoanalytic thought (Hoffman, 2004, 2011). In this chapter, I focus specifically on the seminal cadence of the Christian narrative—*incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection*—and demonstrate that it may both be recognized in the literature of contemporary, relational psychoanalysis and also serve as a generative source for further theory development. I begin with an overview of my earlier juxtaposition of *incarnation* with the psychoanalytic concept of *identification*, and *crucifixion* with the psychoanalytic concept of *surrender*. This introductory portion lays the infrastructure for the central task of this chapter, which is to extend relational psychoanalytic theory by juxtaposing *resurrection* with a revitalized psychoanalytic understanding of *gratitude*.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud (1921/1955) states, “In the individual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved ... so from the very first, individual psychology ... is at the same time social psychology” (p. 69). Contemporary psychoanalysis has developed, extended, and amended these aspects of Freud’s corpus, asserting that relationship lies at the nexus of both damage and healing of human personality.

With this augmented focus on relationship, intersubjectivity and “mutual recognition” as defining constructs of human community became centerpieces of relational psychoanalysis, particularly through the work of Jessica Benjamin (1988, 1990, 1995). Benjamin focused on the significance of mutual recognition, which is the capacity to see others as equal subjects, with needs, desires, and perspectives that can differ from one’s own, and the reciprocating experience of the other’s acknowledgment of oneself. The attainment of this capacity allows each person to give and receive acknowledging responses. It is the development of such a capacity that is Benjamin’s initial focus and that then forms the basis for her application of intersubjectivity theory.

Drawing primarily on Winnicott and infancy research in psychoanalysis and on Hegel in philosophy, Benjamin argued that it is *mutual recognition* that validates the subjectivity of each individual and also validates the intersubjective relational matrix that bonds one person to another. The construct of mutual recognition thus became a seminal relational psychoanalytic concept that had its root in philosophy.

Benjamin interlaced Hegel into the fabric of relational psychoanalytic thought by lifting an integral part of his thinking—the thoughts on lordship and bondage, master and slave—and making it central to her understanding of the problem of recognition. These ideas have often been used as a self-contained trope separated from many of his other premises. Indeed, the chapter on lordship and bondage must be seen as the midpoint of Hegel’s thinking in his magnum opus, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807/1977). For Hegel, trained both in Christian theology and philosophy, the midpoint of negation and destruction was inspired by his study of the crucifixion. This midpoint of crucifixion was, however, preceded by the first movement toward recognition, that of incarnation. The midpoint of destruction and negation—crucifixion—was followed by Hegel’s development of yet

another movement in the process of recognition, which is resurrection. What I demonstrate is that this same basic rhythm—*incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection*—may also be traced in the literature of relational psychoanalysis. I juxtapose the first movement of *incarnation* with the concept of identification, the second of *crucifixion* with the concept of surrender, and develop the path toward mutual recognition beyond Benjamin’s midpoint, which focuses on the alterity of Hegel’s negation, to the generativity of the third movement of resurrection and the concept of *gratitude*. I first utilize the hermeneutic, lexicographic approach of Paul Ricoeur (2005) as the framework upon which I craft the path of recognition based on and extending Benjamin’s writings, and again as I elaborate on the third movement, gratitude. Ricoeur offers a necessary hermeneutical sensibility to our examination, one that examines Hegel’s work not for objective truth but, rather, for its cadence, its resonance, and for a renewed understanding of his symbols—the incarnate infant, the cross, and the empty tomb.

I present this study with the sentiment best expressed by Charles Taylor in his book, *Sources of the Self* (1989). He writes, “The intention of this work was one of retrieval, an attempt to uncover buried goods through rearticulation—and thereby to make these sources again empower, to bring the air back again into the half-collapsed lungs of the spirit” (p. 520). Thus, through an exploration of Hegel through the lens of Ricoeur and in dialogue with Benjamin, I cull ancient writ to pollinate current theory in an attempt to breathe air into the those buried narratives that have helped shape the thoughts relational analysts are thinking.

I begin with the work of Paul Ricoeur in *The Course of Recognition* (2005). There, Ricoeur’s signature hermeneutic method suggests that the evolving lexical definitions of the word “recognition” reflect the actual trajectory of the experience of recognition. Extrapolating from Ricoeur and Benjamin and collating that with *Merriam-Webster’s* (2002) and the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* (1989) definitions, I understand three progressive and repeating movements of recognition:

*Definition one:* Acknowledging the existence of someone—that is, *identification*

This leads to

*Definition two:* Acknowledging the differentiated status of someone who has rights—that is, *surrender*

This culminates in

*Definition three:* Acknowledging this differentiated status of someone through expression of appreciation—that is, *gratitude*

I elaborate on these three movements of recognition, offering Hegel's triphasic progression of recognition between God and humans as an analogue for the development of mutual recognition between mother and infant, analyst and analysand. Following a review of the first two movements of recognition, I ultimately wish to elaborate on the third—gratitude—and establish it as an essential experience of mutual recognition between human beings, one that in the words of George Simmel (1950) is “the moral memory of mankind” (p. 388).

## THE FIRST MOVEMENT TOWARD MUTUAL RECOGNITION: IDENTIFICATION/INCARNATION

Before the infant's birth, the mother is not seen by the fetus but felt and heard. Trevarthen (2009) suggests that “the first awareness a human being can have of another is transmitted through the interior of the body of the mother to her foetus” (p. 514).

Similarly, during pregnancy, mother has felt and heard; after birth, she sees. Meltzoff (as cited in Beebe & Lachmann, 1998) reports that “infants as young as 42 min can imitate the facial expression of an adult model ... [t]hrough cross-modal matching. ... This cross-modal matching ... provides the earliest experience of ‘like me’” (p. 488). At the neurological level, Gallese (2009) asserts that through the firing of mirror neurons an identification with another is made possible through the brain's mirroring properties. He asserts that the

shared intersubjective we-centric space mapped by mirroring mechanisms is likely crucial in bonding neonates and infants to the social

world, but it progressively also acquires a different role. It provides the self with the capacity to simultaneously entertain self–other identification and difference. (p. 530)

In my analytic practice, in similar fashion, I hear the voice message of a prospective patient and, like mother and prenatal infant, I wonder, “Who will this person be?” During my return call, I register the person’s cues, and she mine. When my new patient arrives, I listen and continue listening for many sessions as I seek to provide a “holding environment.” I look as well. I see my new patient looking at me, probing my demeanor, seeing me seeing her. I strive to identify with her and narrate her story in a way that resonates and promotes mentalization (Fonagy et al., 2002). Benjamin (2000) describes this process of identification of the patient’s experience of my mind beginning to understand her mind, describing “mutual identification as crucial to my understanding of how we solve the dilemma of helping the person who does not yet have her own voice” (p. 294).

An analogue to the intersubjective experiences of mother and infant and analyst and analysand can be found in Hegel’s depiction of God’s identification with humanity in the incarnation. Hegel presents God’s entrance into the human frame as a growing mutual identification between God and humans in which each experiences the other fully for the first time. God identified with humans in His incarnation so that humanity could see in Jesus who they were meant to be and, conversely, that Jesus could identify with the sufferings of His creation and “hear” the “others’” voice. For Hegel, this incarnational/identificatory initiative of God’s love is the essence of Trinity and the loving force for life that inaugurates the first movement toward mutual recognition, and it is for him the beginning of the template of intersubjective relating that becomes reflected in all human relationships.

## **THE SECOND MOVEMENT TOWARD MUTUAL RECOGNITION: SURRENDER/CRUCIFIXION**

In mutual identification, the mother/infant dyad experiences difference first evidenced in “markedness”—the differentiated though empathic

response of the mother. Benign difference soon deploys as a clash of subjectivities, hopefully culminating in the infant's capacity to view mother as separate. "Winnicott presents the idea that in order to be able to 'use' the object we first have to 'destroy' it," remarks Benjamin (1988, p. 37) as she weds Winnicott to the Hegelian notion of "negation," where opposing "doer"/"done-to" complementarities prevail.

Crucial for the infant is mother's survival without retaliation or damage. When the mother survives, the infant is dissuaded of its own omnipotence, surrenders, and begins to develop a capacity for recognition of the mother's "otherness." The infant surrenders to a higher principle of rightness, or "moral thirdness" in Benjamin's terms, one that parallels the mother's surrender to the sacrificial process of motherhood that survives the infant's demands and attacks. Likewise, in treatment, patient and analyst begin to assert their individualities, colonizing each others' minds via the distorting lenses of personal histories. These distorted perceptions catapult the therapeutic dyad into enactments fueled by painful, unacknowledged, unmourned memories. The opposition that develops, the *negation*, progressively refines the contours of the other's subjectivity, his or her alterity, and facilitates the establishment of mutual recognition. Both therapist and patient surrender to a process that will involve confusion, pain, and crucifixion. For each, surrender to a process, a third, with belief in its benevolent goal, carries the treatment forward. Analyst and patient replace repetition with remembering as each recognizes the subjectivity of the other.

Hegel presents a theological analogue to the human struggle. Jesus's incarnation alone was insufficient for reconciliation, for humanity saw Him through its projections. Fully human in His needs, dependencies, and disappointments, Jesus was not shielded by His divinity. He became the broken and reviled "everyman," relinquishing power and surrendering to necessary destruction. In Zizek's words, Jesus "[saw] *Himself from the (distorting) human perspective*" (Zizek & Milbank, 2009, p. 82). For Jesus, the cross was a voluntary surrender in order to understand, to empathize with humanity. For the observers, it was a time in which the capacity to destroy would be met by unflinching love that would survive destruction and confirm Jesus's alterity. Hegel (1807/1977) elaborates:

[224] *Healing Through Relation*

But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. ... Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. (p. 19)

## THE THIRD MOVEMENT TOWARD MUTUAL RECOGNITION: GRATITUDE

I begin with Ricoeur's lexicographic, hermeneutic methodology first deployed in my examination of recognition, and I apply it to the study of gratitude. Then, after exploring gratitude's Hegelian analogue in resurrection, I move to a review of psychoanalytic literature pertaining to gratitude, applying the findings to psychoanalytic theory and practice.

### Gratitude in the English Lexicon

Through Ricoeur's lexicographical method, gratitude was identified as the third movement of recognition. Continuing that method, a collation of *Merriam-Webster's* (2002) and the *Oxford English Dictionary's* (1989) definitions renders the following meanings for gratitude:

1. The quality of being grateful
2. Good will toward a benefactor
3. Desire to do something in return

*Merriam-Webster's* also notes that both "gratitude" and "grace" derive from the Latin root "*gratus*," and the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists *grace* as an obsolete definition of *gratitude*. *Grace* is historically and linguistically connected with the root of *gratitude*. *Grace* connotes the benevolence of the giver for whom gratitude is an appropriate response. Thus, an intersubjectively informed definition of *gratitude* is "the quality of being grateful to a benefactor (often superior) whose unmerited beneficence or gift (*grace*) prompts a desire to do something in return." The notion of gift is inextricably related to the experience of gratitude, and I demonstrate its relevance as I explore the genesis of gratitude.

## Gratitude as Analogue to Resurrection in Hegel

The theme of “gift” emerges in Hegel’s theological third movement. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus is the generative moment of Hegel’s opus. In surviving destruction through surrender to love and thus with forgiveness and compassion, Jesus is no longer mere projection but is seen in His alterity as the God He claimed to be. In celebration of the negation of death and the gift of life, a universally available Spirit of love is gifted to humanity. God as Spirit, the Third, is a gift that makes connection with the life-giving Spirit of God available to all people across geographic, ethnic, and temporal boundaries. This gift and its resultant intersubjective connection, according to Hodgson (2005), are passed on through internalization of the loving model of Jesus, that of a life characterized by “shared suffering, creat[ing] a new kind of human relationship in which one finds oneself only by losing oneself for the sake of the other. ... It is grounded in the divine compassion” (p. 183). Jesus then becomes not only an exemplar of sacrificial living but also a truly new, good object that exists beyond human omnipotent control and inspires gratitude for grace given, a gratitude demonstrated through giving to others of the freely received love that survives destruction.

## Gratitude in Psychoanalysis: Klein and Winnicott

Gratitude was a robust psychoanalytic concept in the work of Melanie Klein. She (1957/1975) writes,

The capacity to enjoy fully what has been received, and the experience of gratitude towards the person who gives it, influence strongly both the character and the relations with other people. It is not for nothing that in saying grace before meals, Christians use the words, “For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful.” The words imply that one asks for the one quality—gratitude—which will make one free from resentment and envy. (p. 254)

Klein’s *Envy and Gratitude* (1957/1975) implicated the death instinct with its manifestation in envy and aggression as restraining the

development of gratitude. Specifically, the infant whose envy of the breast is both a reaction to environmental failure and an expression of its innate destructiveness attacks the breast and the goodness of the object. Depending on the virility of the infant's envious attack, its capacity for gratitude will vary. Klein's interest in this context is in "the effects of envy on the development of the capacity for gratitude and happiness. Envy contributes to the infant's difficulties in building up his good object" (p. 180). Klein affirmed the competent mother, stating that "the more often gratification at the breast is experienced and fully accepted, the more often enjoyment and gratitude and accordingly the wish to return pleasure are felt" (p. 189). However, her focus was the infant's endowment, which facilitated or thwarted the experience of gratitude.

When we turn to Winnicott's work, gratitude seems to disappear; there is almost no mention of it in his work. In contrast to Klein's emphasis on the innate destructiveness of the infant, Winnicott emphasized an optimistic view of human development and shifted his focus of study to the positive strivings of the infant, who would develop optimally if parental care was "good enough" (Winnicott, 1962, p. 238). Moving away from Klein, Winnicott disposed of the death instinct and reversed Klein's emphasis on the benevolence of the providing mother through his proclivity to emphasize the innate goodness and entitlement of the infant. He both privileged a focus on the myriad maternal/parental failures experienced by the infant and redefined attacks of the infant as developmental strivings. Although Klein and Winnicott engaged mother and infant, each tilted their inquiry in differing directions.

I propose that it is in the gap between Klein's destructive infant, whose aggression and demands might evoke retaliation from the mother were it not for her goodness, and Winnicott's good and entitled infant, who deserves the mother's preoccupation, that the concept of gratitude evaporates. With the infant's entitlement as the starting point and ongoing focus, gratitude for goodness received, often through the mother's sacrifice, was removed from its more central role (Kraemer, 1996). For Winnicott, because there was no death instinct, there was no innate destructiveness of the infant. And if the infant is entitled to receive all goodness a parent might be capable of giving, there is—at

least theoretically—no need for gratitude: There is simply normative expectation and potential frustration. I believe that neither Klein nor Winnicott achieved a theoretical depressive position in which the “goodness” and “badness” of both mother and infant were reconciled.

For Melanie Klein, the giving mother who encounters the destructive attacks of the infant emerges as an object of appreciation. For Winnicott, the magnificent infant supported by loving parents evokes an appreciative gaze, particularly in its endurance of maternal failings. For Ricoeur, both infant and mother are far more touched by radical evil and extravagantly more abundant in their goodness than either Klein or Winnicott have envisioned. This contrast between radical brokenness and superabundant goodness leads Ricoeur (1986) to the hope-giving exultation: “Man is the Joy of Yes in the sadness of the finite” (p. 140).

Winnicott’s dismissal of the death instinct (based in part on its proximity to the idea of original sin) and his emphasis on maternal impact on the developing infant foreclosed upon a continuing study of infant constitutional factors that were more compatible with Klein’s ideas (Carter, 1994). Psychoanalysis has since taken its lead from Winnicott and has been hesitant to directly revisit the complex, morally riddled dilemma of the origins and transmission of evil. When Klein’s seminal theories on paranoid/schizoid and depressive positions are currently invoked, her contributions on destructive, constitutional factors in the infant are usually diminished or excised.

Sue Grand, in her path-breaking work *The Reproduction of Evil* (2000), is representative of a genre of psychoanalytic literature (e.g., Boulanger, 2007; Brothers, 2008; Howell, 2005) that is addressing the effects of evil and trauma not only on the victim but also as they are transmitted intersubjectively and transgenerationally. Although these newer contributions have gone far in cataloging evil’s contagion, effects, and healing, they have not returned to examining evil’s potential constitutional source in the agentic, human subject. Without reinvocation of the death instinct, one may discover a human brokenness that pervades from the earliest moments of life. Ricoeur, in his early philosophical work *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1966), would seem to echo Klein’s ideas when he stated that there is “an evil self at the roots of an evil act” (p. 58). He would

maintain that this constitutionally determined condition is ubiquitous, and its effects are profound. Ricoeur's methodology involved, in part, an application of this hermeneutic approach to the symbols, words, and myths describing evil such as stain, defilement, guilt, and "missing the mark." I attempt to concisely distill his conclusions, adding scientific and psychoanalytic validation to support them.

### Radical Evil; Originary Goodness

Each person's choices are intentional and have a *telos* toward meaningful purposes (e.g., in relational psychoanalysis, orientation toward relationship is understood as the organizing motivation of humans). Ricoeur describes this capacity to orient as the "will." However, for Ricoeur, "despite being capable of achieving many aims and goods in the world, the human being remains, at bottom, a fallen creature wracked by a fundamental incapacity to fully realize his or her *teloi*" (Wall, 2001, p. 241). Ricoeur (1995) defines evil as "*the incapacity belonging to the capable man*, the incapacity that does not abolish capability but presupposes it as the very thing that has ceased to be available to man as we know him historically" (p. 569, emphasis added). For Ricoeur, the gap between achieving a meaningful destiny and the incapacity to do so is the fountainhead of evil.

Although humans choose to do evil, they are also the victims of it. This "thrownness" into evil is inescapable because we belong "to a history of evil, which is always already there for everyone" (Ricoeur, 1985, pp. 636–637). The infant born into the world is already enmeshed in the web of incapacity before it has even parted from the womb.<sup>1,2</sup> Winnicott's good-enough mother may make every attempt to avoid perturbations for the unborn infant, but her finiteness will not permit her to eradicate every potentially damaging factor present even in fetal development. A host of genetic, epigenetic, nutritional, psychological, cultural, political, and other variables intersubjectively construct the forming life.

Ricoeur uses the term "fallible" to describe the binaries of motivation, such as freedom and finiteness, pleasure and responsibility, and reason and feeling, that draw a person in disparate directions, much

as Freud had previously observed. This conflictual state describes the gap in which evil can make its appearance. Ricoeur (1986) states, “It may be said that man’s specific limitation makes evil merely possible; in this case fallibility designates the *occasion*, the point of least resistance through which evil can enter into man” (p. 141). Acting into the gap that fallibility endows is the “servile will.” Ricoeur’s observations seem to echo those of Fairbairn (1952), who described the bondage to internal objects. Ricoeur, privileging the agentic nature of a person capable of choice, saw, like Fairbairn, an agency hobbled by a gravitation to what is evil (or, in Fairbairn’s language, bad objects). According to Ricoeur (1995),

If evil resides somewhere, it is surely in the maxims of our actions, by means of which we hierarchize our preferences, placing duty above desire, or desire above duty. Evil, in fact, consists in a reversal of priority, an inversion or subversion on the plane of the maxims of action. (p. 77)

For psychoanalysts, these reversed priorities derive from our destructive identifications.

Waterstradt (2002) sculpts Ricoeur’s focus on agency: “Thus there is a passive and active; the always-already-there-ness of evil is outside of me, before me, after me, and yet my choice makes me responsible for it. Guilt is specifically *my guilt*” (p. 6). For Ricoeur, there is a gestalt that contextualizes the person’s evil choice in the present. The foreground of one’s evil action deploys out of the background of a history of evil. Ricoeur (1967) concludes,

The evil for which I assume responsibility makes manifest a source of evil for which I cannot assume responsibility, but which I participate in every time that through me evil enters into the world as if for the first time. (pp. 313–314)

I may be identified with my abusive parent, but the abuse I inflict is, specifically, my agentic act.

Ricoeur’s hermeneutic approach to evil offers the means by which evil can be juxtaposed against the even more originary goodness

of human beings. For though there is radical evil, stain, defilement, bondage, Ricoeur (1967) assures,

To infect is not to destroy, to tarnish is not to ruin. The symbol here points toward the relation of radical evil to the very being of man, to the primordial destination of man; it suggests that evil, however positive, however seductive, however affective and infective it may be, cannot make a man something other than a man; infection cannot be a defection, in the sense that the dispositions and functions that make the humanity of man might be unmade, undone, to the point where a reality other than human reality would be produced. ... Evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of a man; it is the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light, and a beauty that remain. However *radical* evil may be, it cannot be as *primordial* as goodness. The symbol of defilement already says this about the servile will, and it says it through the symbol of captivity; for when a country falls intact into the hands of the enemy, it continues to work, to produce, to create, to exist, but for the enemy. (p. 156)

Ricoeur firmly asserts that human goodness predates—that is, is more primordial than—human evil. Ricoeur (1970) utilized symbols and myths to achieve an understanding of evil, and with the same methodology arrived at his conception of human *originary goodness*. He writes, “More profoundly still, these myths recount, after the manner of a transhistorical event, the irrational break, the absurd leap, which separates two views, one concerned with the innocence of coming-to-be, the other with the guilt of history” (p. 39). Ricoeur illuminates the meaning of goodness through his hermeneutic method that presupposes either pole of a dialectic may aid in interpreting the other pole. As Wall (2005) suggests, “The admission—the confession—of radical evil is already, in a way an implicit affirmation of some still more radical capability for goodness” (p. 89). For Ricoeur, radical evil is understood as such only in contrast to its polar opposite, superabundant goodness. Operating on this hermeneutic presupposition, he tests his hypothesis on myths and narratives of human creation and fall, lighting upon the Adamic myth as an exemplar of originary good

upon which evil was superimposed. In that narrative, humans were created in the image of God and capable of relationship with the transcendent and one another, capable of creativity and choices for good and for love (Ricoeur, 1967).

Ricoeur suggests that to the extent that human agency turned against itself in the actualization of evil, a more profound and radical capacity for human moral good remains and can be traced to the primordial gift of existence given by the Creator. Ricoeur attests that existence is meaningful. “‘I can speak,’ ‘I can act,’ ‘I can narrate’ and ‘I can designate myself as imputable,’” states Ricoeur. “What all these instances of ‘I [can] ...’ articulate is the basic capacity of a human being to act and suffer” (Kearney, 2004, p. 168). Goodness has been defiled; original goodness of creation in the image of God remains.

Ricoeur teaches us that Klein’s destructive infant is not symmetrical with the infant whose very being is a celebration of the gift of existence. Nor is the impinging, neglectful, absent mother of Winnicott symmetrical with the mother who, going beyond the bounds of her limitations, makes the infant her “primary maternal preoccupation.” Ricoeur might say that Klein’s infant who may one day be a parent his- or herself is more radically tainted than at first appears, and that both infant and parent are more superabundantly good than “good enough” (Winnicott, 1960/1965). The dynamic that bridges the gap between radical evil and superabundant goodness, according to Ricoeur, can only be explained through the “economy of the gift.”

### The Economy of the Gift

Ricoeur perceives the acts of goodness shared between humans as proceeding from an “economy of the gift.” Collating Ricoeur’s views, Wall (2001, 2005) delineates a progression of three gifts—faith, love, and hope—which I correlate with the psychoanalytic path of recognition. I interpolate the first two movements of recognition—identification and surrender—in light of Ricoeur’s categories and then consider the third movement of gratitude.

Faith is the gift offered by parent or analyst that affirms one’s potential, one’s capability, in the face of seeming incapacity. Faith, according

to Ricoeur, is a gift one has received and in turn—in the economy of the gift—gives to others. Faith is the first response to evil and is seen in the parent's and analyst's courage to *incarnate* into the life of the other, not only to identify with the other's suffering but also to identify with potentials yet to be realized (Loewald, 1960). McWilliams (2004) offers this apt description: "What I mean by faith is a gut-level confidence in a process, despite inevitable moments of skepticism, confusion, doubt, and even despair" (p. 42). Faith transcends the law of equivalence. It is the surplus of an abundance of faith previously received.

Love is the gift that is offered when as mother or as analyst we are surviving destruction. It was a gift once given to us as our parents and analysts *surrendered* to the difficult process of receiving our destructiveness, and survived our destructiveness through love and its corollary, forgiveness. Love is the capacity to respect the infant or analysand as other while they are not yet able to respond in kind, surviving their destruction—or *crucifixion* in Hegel's terms. This second movement of a love that survives introduces into the world of the infant and the patient the possibility of seeing parent and analyst as other, as surrender to the process brings about a relinquishing of omnipotent control and an openness to the gift of love that is being offered.

Hope is the third gift in Ricoeur's economy, and it facilitates experiencing the third movement of recognition: resurrection and gratitude. Emerging from the chaos of destruction, a new birth of sight occurs in which mother and analyst are no more mere projections of the infant and the patient but are separate and, in this sense, new. There is a resurrection experience in which the patient does not recognize the analyst as the person previously seen. The gifts of faith and love create a passage for the arrival of the gift of hope, of things radically new, of goodness rebirthed. These gifts have time after time been received by both mother and analyst, and now hope rekindles in gifting the other. Apprehending the mother and the analyst as separate people provides the new experience of the most mature form of recognition: gratitude. At this apex of the recognition process, the child or patient experiences and acknowledges the receipt of "other than me substance" (Winnicott, 1968/1989). Before gratitude, both infant and

patient have been sustained by the faith and love of the mother and analyst. As Benjamin (2006) observes,

Within the paradigm of the analytic dyad, what the patient initially finds beneficial in opening to the analyst's independent mind is the possibility that there really can be an Other mind that tunes into his own. When the analyst is empathic, for instance, the empathy is coming from an Outside Other. As Winnicott put it in the nursing metaphor in "The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications," such understanding is "not me" nutriment, it is real—the milk is coming from an outside breast, not from something that is under my omnipotent control. By the same token, this relinquishing of omnipotent control is what makes it valuable to the patient because it means that there is somebody out there from whom I can receive and learn something that is not auto generated. There is somebody, an Other, out there whom I might connect to. In short, since the outside can be a source of goodness, it becomes safe and even desirable to go outside. Otherness is not simply inherently threatening. (p. 140)

Ricoeur positions gratitude at the height of the path of mutual recognition. Neither in identification nor in surrender could acknowledgment of dependence on the giver be achieved, even while the giver's gifts of faith and love facilitated the moves to identification and surrender. Gratitude goes beyond a recognition that merely comprehends roles of mother and infant, analyst and patient; gratitude also goes beyond a recognition of the alterity of mother and infant, of analyst and patient. Gratitude surrenders to their asymmetrical positions. Gratitude acknowledges dependency on another whose grace has been received. Gratitude is the first moment of the gift being accepted as such. Gratitude follows in the wake of resurrection and is always at risk of running amok on the shoals of obligation and reciprocity, risks that would pervert it into a submissive act of coercion. Gratitude for a gift given poses a dilemma: How may gratitude be expressed if a reciprocal gift invalidates the first gift? As Derrida (1992) has commented, "For there to be a gift, *it is necessary [il faut]* that the *donne* not give back, amortize, reimburse, acquit himself, enter into a contract, and that he never have contracted a debt" (p. 13).

[234] *Healing Through Relation*

In his attempt to address the conundrum of receiving the gift, Ricoeur invokes Mauss's (1989) work on gifting practices among tribal groups. In groups such as the Maori, the gift itself carries a magical power that binds the community together, a power that presses to be passed on. Ricoeur (2005) demystifies these practices and establishes that, in fact, the Maori practice points to a universal desire to pass on the gift as part of the action of gratitude. This notion is apparent in the third lexicographic definition of gratitude.<sup>3</sup>

A ready illustration of Ricoeur's contention is seen in the parent/child relationship. The early smiles and coos of the infant bring delight to the parents, the earliest responses of an infant to the good it is receiving. As the child matures, it finds little in its power to give beyond verbal expressions of gratitude that might adequately compensate the parents for their efforts. A child's greatest expression of gratitude to the parent occurs in time when the good gifts of faith and love that the child has received are in turn given to another. This resurrection and replication of the now-internalized good parent is the indirect gift of hope, which the parent in turn receives. The parents' hope is fortified as the economy of the gift recycles through the lives of their children. Hope is further instantiated for parents as this new birth of transformative faith and love is transmitted by their children into their own communities of relationships. Ricoeur's economy of the gifts that resurrect in generation after generation eclipses mere resuscitation of primordial originary goodness. In a reformulated, yet distinct echo of Hegel, Devin Singh (2008) offers a riveting explication of Ricoeur's use of the metaphor of Christ's resurrection, envisioning its surplus potential as follows:

The possibility opened up through the resurrection is the future of history. It portrays the *novum*, the radically new, which comes to transform history, not merely to interrupt it. ... The surplus of meaning in the resurrection contributes to new possible meanings for reality. ... The ordinary of existence is ruptured, and God's new possibilities have entered our realm. As a historian discovers hope in the mode of memory, so the prophet shapes memory in the mode of hope. Our past and present must be viewed in light of the future. They are the past and present of things future. ... The resurrection as metaphor has a surplus

of meaning. It is a poetic redescription of reality, projecting new possibilities for existence. (p. 6)

The gifts given by both parents and analysts evolve into far more than justice would require and supersede the logic of recompensed equivalence. Parents and analysts are not merely good enough. In the face of resistance, hostility, and dismissal, their faith, love, and hope become superabundant as the pain they had previously endured and that was met with these gifts becomes transformed into a capacity for identification and empathy. This capacity that arises out of those ashes of pain becomes multiplied in the lives of the recipients through the “surplus” of the economy of the gift, a surplus fueled by the human longing to pass on the good gifts given by others. This is the economy of the gift: a generative cycle of mutual recognition and responsiveness to the abundance and essential affirmatory goodness of the gifts of faith, love, and hope, of life, and of the gift of the other, the “yes” in the sadness of the finite.

## CONCLUSION

In his classic work *After Virtue* (1984), Alasdair MacIntyre mused about the endowment of ages past. He writes, “We are, whether we acknowledge it or not, what the past has made us and we cannot eradicate from ourselves ... those parts of ourselves which are formed by our relationship to each formative stage in our history” (p. 130). The ancient Christian narrative, resuscitated by Hegel in his epic corpus, has entered the sea of psychoanalytic thought through the philosophical erudition of Jessica Benjamin. The cadence of *incarnation*, *crucifixion*, and *resurrection*, encapsulated in the Christian narrative, has survived the destruction of a once-positivist psychoanalysis. A reconstituted Christian narrative has become analogue to a renewed psychoanalysis, revitalized by the intersubjective cadence of *identification*, *surrender*, and *gratitude*. The developmental achievement of gratitude provides the human capacity to progress beyond respect for the other’s alterity to gratitude for the other’s subjectivity.

## NOTES

1. Epigenomes of a fetus are impacted by the mother's environment. Lipton (1998) notes,
 

In the uterus, the fetus is in a constant state of “downloading” genetic information.... [E]nvironmental information observed by the fetus was not primarily intended for the fetus [but] deployed by the maternal nervous system in response to her perception of her environment. ... The same signals cross the placenta and profoundly impact the genetics and behavior of the developing fetus. (p. 8)
2. Longitudinal studies of human subjects that tracked variables such as the effects of nutrition, smoking, and stress have established transgenerational non-DNA genetic mutations. In a study by Lars Bygren (Bygren et al., 2002) of 99 individuals born in the remote region of Norrbotten, Sweden, the data suggested that just one winter of overeating in childhood could initiate epigenetic changes that would cause one's grandchildren to die decades before their peers.
3. Empirical research supports Ricoeur's ideas. In a study by Bartlett and DeSteno (2006), participants in one group engaged in a repetitive and tedious eye–hand coordination task, which had to be aborted and retaken due to an alleged computer failure. At this point in the experiment, a “benefactor” who was actually a member of the research team offered to help the frustrated participant and was able to solve the computer problem, making it unnecessary for the participant to repeat the task. This “gratitude” group was then compared with a neutral, control group who completed the task with no computer difficulty and no benefactor. Members of both groups were then asked by the benefactor or a complete stranger if they would be willing to help with a difficult task. Bartlett and DeSteno discovered that participants who experienced the situation that evoked gratitude spent more time helping both the benefactor and the stranger alike than did participants who had not experienced gratitude. The findings were understood to demonstrate that prosocial behavior is augmented by gratitude and that prosocial behavior subsequent to the experience of gratitude exists independently from a motivation to reciprocate.

## REFERENCES

- Bartlett, M., & DeSteno, D. (2006). Gratitude and prosocial behavior: Helping when it costs you. *Psychological Science*, *17*, 319–325.
- Beebe, B., & Lachmann, F. M. (1998). Co-constructing inner and relational processes: Self- and mutual regulation in infant research and adult treatment. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, *15*, 480–516.
- Benjamin, J. (1988). *The bonds of love*. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Benjamin, J. (1990). Recognition and destruction: An outline of intersubjectivity. In L. Aron & S. Mitchell (Eds.), *Relational psychoanalysis: The emergence of a tradition* (pp. 181–210). Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.
- Benjamin, J. (1995). *Like subjects, love objects*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Benjamin, J. (2000). Response to commentaries by Mitchell and by Butler. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, *1*, 291–308.
- Benjamin, J. (2006). Two-way streets: Recognition of difference and the intersubjective third. *Differences*, *17*, 116–146.

- Bloch, E. (2005). On the original history of the Third Reich. In E. Mendieta (Ed.), *The Frankfurt School on religion* (pp. 21–40). New York: Routledge.
- Boulanger, G. (2007). *Wounded by reality: Understanding and treating adult onset trauma*. New York, NY: Analytic Press.
- Brothers, D. (2008). *Toward a psychology of uncertainty: Trauma-centered psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: Analytic Press.
- Bygren, L., Edvinsson, S., & Kaati, G. (2002). Cardiovascular and diabetes mortality determined by nutrition during parents' and grandparents' slow growth period. *European Journal of Human Genetics*, 10(11), 682–688.
- Carter, J. (1994). Psychopathology, sin, and the DSM: Convergence and divergence. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 22(4), 277–285.
- Derrida, J. (1992). *Given time, I: Counterfeit money*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1952). *Psychoanalytic studies of the personality*. London, England: Routledge.
- Fonagy, P., Target, M., Gergely, G., & Jurist, E. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization, and the development of the self*. New York, NY: Other Press.
- Freud, S. (1955). Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 18, pp. 67–42). London, England: Hogarth. (Original work published 1921)
- Gallese, V. (2009). Mirror neurons, embodied simulation, and the neural basis of social identification. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 19, 519–536.
- Grand, S. (2000). *The reproduction of evil*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hegel, G. (1977). *Phenomenology of spirit* (A. V. Miller, Trans.). London, England: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1807)
- Hodgson, P. (2005). *Hegel and Christian theology: A reading of the lectures on the philosophy of religion*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffman, M. (2004). *From enemy combatant to strange bedfellow: The role of religious narratives in the work of W. R. D. Fairbairn and D. W. Winnicott*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.
- Hoffman, M. (2011). *Toward mutual recognition: Relational psychoanalysis and the Christian narrative*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Howell, E. (2005). *The dissociative mind*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.
- Kearney, R. (2004). *On Paul Ricoeur: The owl of Minerva*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Klein, M. (1975). *Envy and gratitude and other works 1946–1963* (M. Khan, Ed.). London, England: Hogarth. (Original work published 1957)
- Kraemer, S. B. (1996). Betwixt the dark and the daylight of maternal subjectivity: Meditations on the threshold. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 6, 765–791.
- Lipton, B. (1998). Nature, nurture, and the power of love. *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health*, 13, 3–10.
- Loewald, H. W. (1960). On the therapeutic action of psycho-analysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 16–33.
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mauss, M. (1989). *The gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. New York, NY: Norton.
- McWilliams, N. (2004). *Psychoanalytic psychotherapy: A practitioner's guide*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Merriam-Webster's third new international dictionary*. (2002). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Oxford English dictionary* (2nd ed.). (1989). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1966). *Freedom and nature: The voluntary and the involuntary* (E. Kohak, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

- Ricoeur, P. (1967). *The symbolism of evil*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1985). Evil: A challenge to philosophy and theology. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 53(3), 635–648.
- Ricoeur, P. (1986). *Fallible man*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1995). *Figuring the sacred*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.
- Ricoeur, P. (2005). *The course of recognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Simmel, G. (1950). *The sociology of Georg Simmel* (K. H. Wolff, Ed. & Trans.). Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Singh, D. (2008). Resurrection as surplus and possibility: Moltmann and Ricoeur. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 61, 251–269.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Trevarthen, C. (2009). The intersubjective psychobiology of human meaning: Learning of culture depends on interest for co-operative practical work—and affection for the joyful art of good company. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 19, 507–518.
- Wall, J. (2001). The economy of the gift: Paul Ricoeur's significance for theological ethics. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 29(2), 235–260.
- Wall, J. (2005). *Moral creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the poetics of possibility*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Waterstradt, R. (2002). *Evil—What's the problem? The completeness of the fault in Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of the will*. Unpublished symposium presentation, Fordham University.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1965). Theory of parent–infant relationship. In *The maturational process and the facilitating environment* (pp. 37–55). London, England: Hogarth. (Original work published 1960)
- Winnicott, D. W. (1962). The theory of the parent–infant relationship—Further remarks. *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, 43, 238–239.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1989). The use of an object and relating through identifications. In C. Winnicott, R. Shepherd, & M. Davis (Eds.), *Psycho-analytic explorations* (pp. 218–227). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1968)
- Zizek, S., & Milbank, J. (2009). *The monstrosity of Christ* (C. Davis, Ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## Commentary on Hoffman: Gratitude and Existential Uncertainty

DORIS BROTHERS

After reading Marie Hoffman's inspiring chapter and having read her book, *Toward Mutual Recognition*, I have developed the fantasy that we are twins who have been reared apart. Hoffman grew up in a Christian family, whereas I was raised by nonpracticing Jews. Hoffman's favorite intellectual relatives are Hegel, Benjamin, and Ricoeur, whereas mine include Kohut, Stolorow, Orange, Levinas, and Arendt. Much of the language Hoffman learned to speak sounds like an exotic dialect to me. Words closely associated with Christianity such as *incarnation*, *crucifixion*, and *resurrection* that spring effortlessly to her lips do not easily roll off my tongue. Even the psychoanalytic lingo we use is dissimilar. Hoffman speaks of *identification*, *separation*, and *thirds*, whereas I am more likely to say things about *empathy*, *relational systems*, and *existential uncertainty*.

Although Hoffman and I have both written about evil, we approach this vexing topic from very different angles. Whereas Hoffman supports Ricoeur's (1966) contention that there is "an evil self at the roots of an evil act," I am more in sympathy with Hannah Arendt's (1968) insistence that we regard deeds as evil, not the doers. From my perspective, "Not only does the action deemed evil emerge within and affect the perpetrator's interpenetrating relational systems, the decision to regard the act as evil does as well" (Brothers, 2010).

Thus, given all these differences between us, what stirred my fantasy of twinship with Hoffman? Nothing less than her insights into the importance of gratitude, which, as she says, Ricoeur placed at the height of the path toward mutual recognition. I am sorry to admit that before encountering Hoffman's work, I had never considered gratitude an indispensable psychoanalytic concept. Now I share her conviction that it should be regarded in just this way, and I see its profound relevance for my own work.

Hoffman endorses Jessica Benjamin's understanding of mutual recognition as involving "the capacity to see others as equal subjects with needs, desires, and perspectives that differ from one's own and the reciprocating experience of the other's acknowledgment of oneself" (Hoffman, 2011, p. 12). Levinas would undoubtedly insist that we place more weight on recognizing the irreducible alterity of the other person than on appreciating our equality as subjects. Although I agree with Richard Bernstein's (1995) assertion that "contrary to Levinas, there is a reciprocity between the I and 'the Other' (l'autrui) which is compatible with their radical alterity" (p. 74), the idea that gratitude takes us "beyond alterity" troubles me. Still, it strikes me that Hoffman's use of mutual recognition bears some resemblance to the self-psychological notion of twinship, their emanation from different language games and different psychoanalytic allegiances notwithstanding. This resemblance is most apparent in Koichi Togashi's (2010) understanding of twinship as "mutually finding oneself and not-oneself in the other." That is, from his perspective, twinship involves recognizing both difference from and similarity to another person who is reciprocating this complex way of relating.

In contrast to Kohut (1984), who held that twinship, or the sense of "being a human among humans," is a developmental need that unfolds maturationally in a hospitable milieu, Stolorow (2011), drawing on Heidegger, contends that the longing for twinship is reactive to the emotional trauma that is constitutive of our existence. I agree that longings for twinship and mutual recognition, whatever their origins, are ever-present in our lives. However, as I shall explain soon, I view trauma as intensifying these longings in ways that can be the prelude to enormous pain and suffering.

Hoffman (2011) contends that “mutual recognition is never fully and finally achieved but is striven for, gained, lost, and recaptured through ongoing dialogue” (p. 17). I could not agree more. Realizing that we can never fully know another person, or be fully known by him or her, does not mean that we must stop reaching toward mutual understanding. From this perspective, mutual recognition and experiences of twinship go a long way toward mitigating the anguish of what I (Brothers, 2008) have called “existential uncertainty” or unbearable doubt about one’s going-on-being (Winnicott, 1965). Although we can never be certain that others will engage with us in the orderly relational give-and-take on which a sense of differentiated selfhood depends, mutual strivings for experiences of what Stolorow (2011) calls “emotional kinship” promote the expectation that they will. Because, from this perspective, psychological survival hangs in the balance, it is difficult for me to imagine not being grateful for the opportunity to engage in such a dialogue.

By introducing the concept of gratitude as the last step in the movement toward mutual recognition, Hoffman challenges us to reexamine not only what it means to be a psychoanalyst but also what it means to be human. Yet, despite its profound significance, the concept of gratitude has not claimed the attention of psychoanalysts. The belief that gratitude falls solely within the purview of theologians and philosophers undoubtedly contributed to its neglect within our field. However, I suspect that entrenched notions about the roles of analysts and patients may have also been at work. I hope the following incident from my own analysis will help explain what made me, and possibly others in our field, steer clear of it.

Although my relationship with my analyst was immensely helpful and transformative, one of the most vivid memories of the 12 years I spent in treatment involves a devastating exchange between us. On a beautiful spring day that followed a session in which she had helped me to surmount a crippling obstacle to my self-understanding, I passed the flower shop on the corner of her street as I always did. A container overflowing with fragrant lilacs caught my eye. Filled with gratitude not only for what had happened the previous day but also for her consistent devotion to understanding and helping me throughout the years, I decided to buy them for her. I had already guessed that

violet hues were her favorites and imagined that these flowers would especially delight her.

As she took the armload of lilacs that I eagerly presented to her, her expression darkened. I could see that my gift had deeply troubled her. She mumbled her thanks and after placing the lilacs in vases, she said, “We have to find out what made it necessary for you to buy me flowers today.” The remainder of the session was filled with our speculations about my “real” motivation in giving her this gift. I imagine that my analyst could not abandon what she considered her primary job—that is, explicating the transference and confronting what she may well have considered “an enactment.” Although I tried hard to cooperate with her in uncovering the dark truth about this show of gratitude, I was crushed.

Thanks to what I have recently discovered about trauma, I now realize that we were both reeling from the threat of its recurrence. Using a relational systems perspective, I conceive of trauma in terms of the destruction of the systemically emergent certainties or SECs (Stolorow et al. refer to “organizing principles”) that pattern psychological life and concomitant efforts to restore a sense of certainty about the continuation of psychological existence.

I have come to think of traumatized people as exiles forced to live in a world they no longer recognize, a world without meaning. Having lost all that is known, familiar, and meaningful, and facing the horror of self-annihilation, they are likely to crave reassurance that they have not been stripped of what so powerfully reminds them of their connection to other humans—their similarity to them. Because our hope of emerging from the unbearably lonely exile of trauma depends, to a great extent, on finding that one is still welcomed into the human family, whatever confronts us with evidence of our difference from others may be dissociated from awareness or denied. In other words, among traumatized people, the search for sameness may be transformed into a denial of difference.

The sense of being a distinct, one-of-a-kind individual also emerges out of the relational give-and-take. When the availability of that relational exchange is thrown into doubt by trauma and the loss of one’s very existence as a unique individual seems imminent, the search for difference is also likely to become very intense. Finding differences,

making sharp distinctions among that which is similar, tends to bring certainty to experience. Just as the search for sameness may become transformed into a denial of difference, the search for difference may be transformed into a denial of sameness.

It is probably obvious that feelings of uncertainty are increased by experiences that are complex and multifaceted and reduced by ones that are simpler. In the aftermath of trauma, when the uncertainty of psychological survival seems close to unbearable, we tend to simplify experience by whatever means are available. Denials of sameness and difference then become especially compelling insofar as they are involved in the creation of dichotomies that reduce the complexity of lived experience. Moreover, these denials tend to be rigidly maintained and resist all appeals to reason. In contexts ruled by denials of sameness and difference, it is probably impossible for gratitude to be felt.

I have wondered if my token of gratitude threatened to destroy one of my analyst's cherished certainties involving her authority as an analyst. By responding to the gifts I had received from her with a gift, I tacitly asserted something about our mutuality. Hoffman, drawing on Ricoeur, tells us that the desire to pass on the gift is part of the action of gratitude. However, I suspect that my analyst may have felt more along the lines of Derrida, that my gift somehow invalidated her own. By trying to excavate my ulterior motives in giving her a gift, she reasserted her distance from me—and the difference between us. I felt that she had denied our sameness as two humans who could both give and receive valuable gifts.

Hoffman writes, "Gratitude acknowledges dependency on another whose grace has been received. Gratitude is the first moment of the gift being accepted as such." Perhaps admitting that we were dependent on one another and therefore that we might well be grateful for one another's participation in the analytic relationship represented a shameful defection from my analyst's professional ideals. I suspect she never considered the possibility that psychoanalytic healing could be bilateral. My friend and colleague, Elizabeth Corpt, has written about "analytic generosity." It strikes me that such generosity includes accepting gifts that attempt to reciprocate one's own.

My analyst's response to my gift seems to exemplify what Ricoeur termed "the hermeneutics of suspicion." As Donna Orange (2011)

notes, when applied to psychoanalysis, this entails “the decision to look upon the whole of consciousness primarily as ‘false consciousness’” (p. 26). I now see that I experienced my analyst’s suspicious inquiry as a shameful denial of my uniqueness. Her attempts to find the ulterior motives for my gift lumped me with others in the category of patients whose responses cannot be taken at face value, but must be seen in light of some theoretical perspective. Because my analyst was well aware of other traumatizing erasures of my individuality in my life, I also experienced her as betraying my trust.

It seems clear to me that gratitude cannot thrive within the hermeneutic of suspicion nor in many contexts of trauma. If, as Stolorow (2011) contends, trauma creates longings for emotional kinship, the strength of those longings and the denials of sameness and difference that follow may have the unfortunate consequence of creating rigidly maintained us–them dichotomies that give rise to the evils that scar our planet and bedevil analytic relationships (Brothers, 2012).

If my traumatic experience with my analyst deterred me from even considering the role of gratitude in our work and in our lives, Hoffman has been fearless in her elevation of it. In doing so, she has nudged psychoanalysis closer to what Orange (2011) calls the “hermeneutics of trust.” “Ricoeur,” Hoffman explains, “perceives the acts of goodness shared between humans as proceeding from an ‘economy of the gift.’” Citing Wall (2001), Hoffman correlates “the gift of hope” with gratitude. In assuring us that words such as faith, hope, love, and gratitude have a place in our psychoanalytic dialogues, I feel more hopeful that we will not perpetuate the denials of difference and sameness that so often follow in the wake of trauma and that instead we can create a milieu in which its devastation can be ameliorated.

## REFERENCES

- Arendt, H. (1968). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil* (rev. ed.). New York, NY: Viking.
- Bernstein, R. J. (1995). *The new constellation: The ethical–political horizons of modernity/post-modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brothers, D. (2008). *Toward a psychology of uncertainty: trauma-centered psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: Analytic Press.

- Brothers, D. (2010). *Confrontations with the unforgivable: Using Hannah Arendt's relational politics to ponder evil and the limits of analytic empathy*. IARPP annual conference, San Francisco, CA, February 25.
- Brothers, D. (2012). Trauma, gender and the dark side of twinship. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 7, 391–405.
- Hoffman, M. T. (2011). *Toward mutual recognition: Relational psychoanalysis and the Christian tradition*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Orange, D. (2011). *The suffering stranger: Hermeneutics for everyday practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ricoeur, P. (1966). *Freedom and nature: The voluntary and the involuntary* (E. Kohak, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Stolorow, R. D. (2011). *World, affectivity, trauma: Heidegger and post-Cartesian psychoanalysis*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Togashi, K. (2010). *Mutual finding of oneself and not-oneself in the other as a twinship experience*. Paper presented at the 33rd International Conference on the Psychology of the Self. Antalya, Turkey, October.
- Wall, J. (2001). The economy of the gift: Paul Ricoeur's significance for theological ethics. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 29(2), 235–260.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1965). *The maturational process and the facilitating environment: Studies in the theory of emotional development*. New York, NY: International Universities Press.