

## The origins and destinies of the idea of thirdness in contemporary psychoanalysis

Nelson Ernesto Coelho junior

To cite this article: Nelson Ernesto Coelho junior (2016) The origins and destinies of the idea of thirdness in contemporary psychoanalysis, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97:4, 1105-1127

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-8315.12433>



Published online: 31 Dec 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

---



## The origins and destinies of the idea of thirdness in contemporary psychoanalysis

Nelson Ernesto Coelho Junior

1359/52 Alameda Lorena, São Paulo, São Paulo 01424-001, Brazil –  
patnelco@uol.com.br

(Accepted for publication 26 August 2015)

*The central aim that animates this paper is to present and discuss the idea of thirdness or analytic third in psychoanalysis, from its origins to the concepts formulated by André Green and Thomas Ogden. The contributions of Winnicott, Reik and the Baranger couple are discussed, as are their influences to contemporary psychoanalysis. In order to promote the clarification and to distinguish different psychoanalytic conceptions of the third, ten figures referring to the meaning of thirdness that appear in different theories are presented, without necessarily their being mutually exclusive. As a final consideration, the article seeks to reorder in four dimensions the ten figures originally presented, emphasizing the central elements in Ogden and Green's constructions. These dimensions are at the same time conceptual and clinical, insofar as they create possibilities of operating the idea of thirdness in the transference/ countertransference dynamics.*

**Keywords:** thirdness, absence, intersubjectivity, contemporary psychoanalysis, Ogden and Green, intersubjectivity, contemporary psychoanalysis, Ogden and Green

To my father, a present absence.

Writing about two of the top authors in contemporary psychoanalysis is a risky and exciting adventure. Separated by a great difference in style, both in terms of thought and the way they express themselves, Thomas Ogden and André Green are connected by their theoretical and clinical interests, which, as a whole, currently form the main thrusts that drive various forms of thinking about and practising psychoanalysis. They helped to construct one of the main aspects of contemporary psychoanalysis, which is the freedom to cross the boundaries between different theories and practices without the curtailment or threat of dogmatic positions that have frozen psychoanalysis for decades in the period of the principal schools (Lacan, Klein, Ego Psychology). In a certain sense, the best psychoanalysis currently practised appears as a *third*, a constituent element of and composed by the pair formed by these two authors who textually referred to each other, especially as regards the subject in question. As early as 1994,<sup>1</sup> Ogden draws on the notion of Green's analytic object (1974) in his relationship with the notion of an analytic third, as well as on Freud, Klein, Lacan, Winnicott

<sup>1</sup>Publication date of the book, *Subjects of analysis*, in which the notion of the 'analytic third' is explicitly stated, although it had been built on since 1990, at least (cf. Ogden, 1990).

and, in 1997, refers to Madeleine Baranger (1993), on her correlated contributions to the theme of analytic intersubjectivity. The idea that a new notion is born based on an intertextuality rooted in the history of psychoanalysis is dear to both Ogden and Green. Since 2000, Green's writing on the subject of the third continuously referred to Ogden (but also Freud, Lacan, Bion, Winnicott, and Bleger), generating an intense dialogue between the texts and between continents that heralds the new moment of a psychoanalytic community no longer entrenched in sectarian ghettos.

Betting on the possibility of furthering an investigative adventure on the concept of the third is what sustains this paper. The central aim that animates this work is to present and discuss the idea of thirdness or the analytic third in psychoanalysis, from its origins to the concepts formulated by Green (*De la tiercéité*) and Ogden (*The analytic third*). As I have indicated, it was in the beginning of the 1990s that both authors began to construct, in a more decisive manner, a notion of the *third*, which soon came to become part of the structure of their thinking. In Ogden's work we find the basis for a refined understanding of different transference/countertransference combinations, with unique clinical examples, in which the notion of the analytic third illuminates and gives sense to different modes of action, speech and thought of the analyst and analysand. In Green, the notion of thirdness meets his metapsychological and psychopathological effort, in which Freudian theory receives the supplement of the object relations tradition in the construction of an innovative theory of the constitution of subjectivity and its vicissitudes in psychopathological disorders. I consider that, in Ogden, the notion is more marked by the innovations he proposes for a theory of the analytic situation, while in Green, thirdness came to constitute one of the hubs of his metapsychological thinking on the clinical and psychopathological dimensions. Furthermore, he sought to criticize the comprehension of object relations in two body psychology's dual terms, proposing a concept of these latter that includes an inaugural reference to the third. But, in any case, they are the authors who, over the past three decades (even if Green had already been referring to *tertiary processes* since 1972), have given the most attention and importance to this psychoanalytic idea.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to emphasize that the idea of a *third* already existed, in more or less explicit forms, in the minds of many other psychoanalysts (Freud, Lacan, Klein, Winnicott, and Segal, among others) well before the publications by Green and Ogden. We have the third of Oedipus, the third of the name of the father, the third of the depressive position, the third of the intermediary space, the third as the symbol (internal object) that connects part of the ego with the representation of the abandoned object, the third symbolized by interpretation (and/or by language) and

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 'The third in psychoanalysis', LXXIII (1), January 2004; and *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, 'Le Tiers Analytique', LXIX (3), June 2005. However, although the work by Ogden and Green stand out in the general context on the subject, we must, now, also point out another contemporary author, the heir of Kleinian tradition in the British school, Ronald Britton (1989, 1998, 2003), and his instigating notions of the *third position* and *triangular psychic space*.

the intersubjective third, as well as that of several other concepts.<sup>3</sup> For Green (2005), it is a fundamental notion in psychoanalytic theory that came in response or opposition to the predominance of dual relationships as a basis for all thought. However, curiously, the emphasis on the dual relationship arose as a criticism to what became conventionally known as one body psychology from classic theory; the solipsist conception that would place the intrapsychic world at the centre of psychoanalytic investigation. For various authors, the inclusion of the countertransference dimension led to the transference-countertransference binomial becoming the basis of thinking regarding the analytic situation. By all accounts, it was John Rickman's conceptual formulation (1951),<sup>4</sup> subsequently used and recontextualized by Michael Balint (1952/1985, p. 235), that first suggested that what happens in an analytic situation is not resolved in the sphere of One Body Psychology, but is basically a Two Body Situation.<sup>5</sup> Viewing things from this perspective, the next challenge would be to put the dual vision into context and open the door to a new hegemony: thirdness. It must still be seen whether duality and thirdness in psychoanalysis are mutually exclusive or supplementary points of view. I will return to this shortly.

### Different *thirds* (thirdness figures)

In psychoanalysis, there is the third that separates, but also the third that reconnects; the third that generates distance, but also the third that brings closer what was irredeemably separated. It may be useful to distinguish the different psychoanalytic concepts of the *third* that appear in distinct theories without necessarily excluding each other:

- 1 The third is a material presence that interrupts an already constituted pair, a third element of equal nature to the first two, as in the more empirical model of the Oedipus complex and Oedipal triangulation.
- 2 The third of absence. For example, according to Green, any dual relationship in psychoanalytic terms brings with it a third; it is the paradox of an absent presence. The mother–infant relationship includes a paternal function from the beginning. It is the other of the object, the

<sup>3</sup>Since 1994, I have been conceiving psychoanalytic notions that involve the figure of the third in my own theoretical efforts. I initially proposed, in my study on the notion of reality in psychoanalysis, the triad: “material reality / psychic reality / clinical reality”, in which clinical reality is, at the same time, constituted by and a constituent part of the other two realities in the analytic field (cf. Coelho Junior, 1995). More recently, in 2010, I proposed the notion of “co-corporeality” to refer to the co-presence of two corporealities that already bring, within themselves, the I and the other in the analytic situation (cf. Coelho Junior, 2010).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Rickman (1951). Rickman proposed a sequence that leads from One-Body Psychology (the classic model of general psychology, with an emphasis on the study of memory, perception and learning processes) up to Multi-Body Psychology (group relationships), through Two-Body Psychology (the mother–infant relationship), Three-Body (the Oedipus complex model) and Four-Body (the rivalry among siblings in the context of the Oedipus complex).

<sup>5</sup>North American relational psychoanalysis from the 1990s (cf. Aron, 1996) used this opposition extensively, defending the relational dimension of a two body psychology against what would be, in their view, classic Freudian psychoanalysis; that is, a solipsist psychoanalysis centred on the patient's intrapsychic dimension and in opposition to the intersubjective dimension.

- open triangle with the interchangeable third* (the father, brother, or uncle who make up the relationship with the mother–infant duo). (Green, 1981)
- 3 The third can also be thought of as the space “in-between two”, the space between these two elements, realities or modes of experience that have already been, or are being, constituted. The intermediary space between the subjective and objective dimensions and which has a constitutive function within them. Here, the third is indicative of dynamism, movement, passage and the appearance of otherness, as in Winnicott’s conceptions.
  - 4 The intersubjective third corresponds to an element that constitutes and, at the same time, is constituted by the duality, as in Ogden’s concept of the analytic third. There are different figures of an intersubjective third that could be thought about through various forms in which otherness emerges in the context of subjective constitution. (Cf. Coelho Junior and Figueiredo (2003).)
  - 5 The third as a joining of two objects. Green (2002) came to define an analytic session in the following terms: “There are three objects: the two separate parts and the object that corresponds to their joining. In the session, the analytic object is like this third object, the product of the joining between those formed by the analysand and analyst” (p. 251). Along this same line, it is possible to think about the framing structure as what appears in the joining of the impulses with the objects.
  - 6 The third from Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, in his triadic concept of signs: firstness: the emotional qualities and perceptions of undifferentiation; secondness: the qualities of duality, of separation and conflict; thirdness: the interaction of the first two, occurring through thought and its capacity to establish laws and generalizations; in other words, the action of signs. These ideas are part of the foundation of Lacan’s and Green’s propositions on the third.
  - 7 The third of dialectic logic, which is a synthesis between a thesis and an antithesis. The synthesis can be temporary, in a teleological conception, but there will necessarily be a final synthesis. In this case, the third is a new entity conceived based on the clash between the two previous ones. Based on Hegel’s master–slave dialectic there is also the inclusion of the theme of recognition between the pair of opposites.
  - 8 The third of a dialectic without synthesis (as proposed by Merleau-Ponty, revisiting Heraclitus of Ephesus): the third that appears as the permanent tension between two poles or as a result of the supplementarity between the poles, as Derrida prefers. This is possibly the philosophical conception on the third that provides the best support for Ogden’s ideas on the analytic third. (cf. Reis, 1999.)
  - 9 The third of the internal object in the depressive position. In the conception of Hanna Segal (cf. Segal, 1957, 1978; Caper, 1997), heir of the Kleinian tradition, it is the symbol as the internal object that makes the connection between one part of the ego and the internal representation of the object, which was abandoned through grief. Thus it

opposes the symbolic equation in which two (ego and external object) become one, as this equation emerges as a way of negating the subject–object separation. Here, the symbol is a third that connects the internal world to the external one, an essential function for the imaginative and sublimatory processes and the development of the capacity for objectivity.

- 10 The third as self-observation. In Ronald Britton's conceptions, the third position and the triangular space refer to, respectively, the good Oedipal solution, in which object relations can be observed, and the mental freedom that is ensured by this triangular process. In Kleinian terms, this is an overcoming of the depressive position and total object relations, in which it becomes feasible to occupy, simultaneously, the Oedipal triangle with a position where it is bearable to observe the other two members of the triangle relating while observing oneself in this situation.

Before moving forward with Green's and Ogden's original theories on the third, I will take a brief detour to concepts that, for me, are at the origin of these two authors' proposals. This comprises the influences of Donald Winnicott, Theodor Reik, and the Barangers on contemporary psychoanalytic notions of the *third*.

### The influence of Winnicott (and Freud)<sup>6</sup>

English psychoanalyst and paediatrician Donald W. Winnicott (1896–1971) had the privilege of advancing Freud's ideas on several theoretical and clinical levels. Using concepts such as the transitional object and phenomena, the intermediary space or third area, Winnicott formulated a new conception of reality. The idea of a third area, of an intermediary space – an *in-between two*, seems to me to be particularly fertile and allowed psychoanalysis to work on three planes of experience instead of just two in permanent opposition (material versus psychic reality). A third plane, an area that, nonetheless, is not preformed, easily delineated synthesis or safe zone. The *in-between* is thus revealed as the psychoanalytic area par excellence, structuring the space of illusion and the condition for creation.

In looking at one of the greatest influences on the conceptions of the *third in psychoanalysis* it should be left clear that I, along with other contemporary psychoanalysts, do not believe that the history of psychoanalytic ideas happens in terms of grand breaks and the regular establishment of thoughts that arise spontaneously. On the contrary, it is important to give maximum value to legacies and recognize Freud's thinking, as well as that of Ferenczi, to a lesser extent, in every post-Freudian author. Furthermore, it is worthwhile remembering that Winnicott himself proposed it is not possible to be original except on a basis of tradition.

<sup>6</sup>Here, I will take up some ideas that were presented in the preface I wrote for Karina Barone's book, *Realidade e Luto: um estudo da transicionalidade* (2004).

If this conviction on the importance of legacies in the construction of psychoanalytic theories is not enough, I present what appears to be further ‘proof’. Rereading a book I have owned for a considerable time and used in a variety of situations, I ‘found’ a passage by Freud on the *in-between*, or in his words, the intermediary realm (*Zwischenreich*). In *Frontiers in psychoanalysis: Between the dream and psychic pain*, French psychoanalyst J. B. Pontalis (1977), argues: “But Freudian thinking, even though it be dualist, a thinking based on conflict and on pair of opposites, does not allow itself to be trapped in a ‘this or that’. Our realm is that of the in-between two, Freud could have said when he was inventing analysis” (p. 9). In a footnote, Pontalis leads the reader to a letter from Freud to Fliess, dated 16 April 1896. The complete passage reads as follows:

I only have a few ideas to record born of my daily work on the intermediary realm [Zwischenreich], such as a generic reinforcement of the impression that *everything* is as I suppose it is and, therefore, everything will be explained.

(Masson, 1986, p. 182).<sup>7</sup>

Of course, when writing the quote above, Pontalis’ reading of Freud was heavily influenced by Winnicott and the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, key authors for his 1977 book and defenders of a line that recognizes the fundamental place of the *in-between two* dimension. Without getting into the hermeneutic disputes, or the importance of the ‘intermediary realm’ in the rest of Freudian thinking, what I would like to register is that even in what has always been considered the most genuinely original by Winnicott one can find, through Pontalis, a grain of Freudian sand. There is no guarantee that this grain of sand is actually present in the inspired Winnicottian conception of reality, but *si non é vero, é bene trovato* (even if it is not true, it is well conceived).

However, as we know, despite the various theoretical and clinical nuances present in Freud’s thinking, the rigid opposition between the external and psychic realities ends up predominating in his work. As regards the psychology of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, this conception represented a great advance in the measure that it lent reality to a dimension that had been treated as pure fiction. Dreams, fantasies and the unconscious all gain the status of reality; that is, the so-called psychic reality becomes worthy of persistent dedication by a scientist and begins to contend for its place as the object of a nascent science. However, as with almost every other aspect of its theories (perhaps even because of a difficulty in thinking outside the frame of a discursive logic that demands oppositions, as Pontalis suggests), Freud continued to be contained to dualist thinking as regards reality, too. A dualist rationale that seems to be neces-

<sup>7</sup>Here, we should also remember the letter from Freud to Groddeck, dated 5 June 1917: “It is known that the Unconscious (*Ubw*) is the authentic link/mediation (*richtige Vermittlung*) between the corporeal (*Körperlichen*) and the psychic (*Seelischen*), perhaps even the much sought after *missing link*.” (pp. 317–18). In other words, the structure of metapsychology, in this case, takes into account three elements, with the unconscious being the third, which is the link and mediation.

sary to sustain one of the main pillars of his conception of the psyche, that is, the idea of conflict. The only exceptions, as already pointed out by André Green (2003), are the Oedipus complex and the psychic apparatus (both for the first and second topic), which require the presence of three elements. The requirement for conflict is also present in these cases, but not in function of simple opposition. These exceptions should not be glossed over, although they are exceptions.

If, on the one hand, the tradition of dualist thinking favoured, in our Western culture – especially based on the Judaeo-Christian tradition – the consistent formulation of many epistemological markers that constructed knowledge in the sciences and philosophy, on the other, it is necessary to recognize its limits and the impasses it imposes. The strict structural oppositions of our culture – like those of good and evil, right and wrong, sanity and madness, public and private, external and internal worlds, reality and fantasy, etc. – obviously in their various degrees of importance and historical, sociological, psychological and cultural settings, are the basis for many of the impasses faced in current times. By all accounts, the difficulty in freeing oneself of the shackles created by dualist thought is a constituent mark of the prejudice, fanaticism, violence and intolerance that inundate our daily lives. Far from being the cause of these phenomena, the opposition between two realities proposed by Freud end up, however, reproducing a model and thus inherit its difficulties and limits. The presence of ‘two’ realities in the theory implies, in clinical terms, the acknowledgement of an inaugural separation between the external and internal worlds, whether the analyst wishes it or not. It does not seem to me to be possible to escape the theoretical and technical impasses resulting from this, which imposes the clinical necessity of developing analytic parameters in accordance with this theoretical construction. If the reason theories on reality take this form is inserted into the scientific conceptions of the time or into the limits of discursive logic, the problem is not solved and, further, various impasses are then placed to post-Freudian authors.

It is my understanding that the innovations proposed by Winnicott to the psychoanalytic conception of reality carry this level of importance. By formulating a theory of the intermediary space between the external and psychic realities, Winnicott creates the conditions for a *third* element in our comprehension of the relations between the subject and his world to be valued. It is the classic opposition between the internal and external worlds that is revisited based on this concept and that led Winnicott to pose three questions of fundamental importance: “We have used the concepts of inner and outer, and we want a third concept. Where are we when we are doing what in fact we do a great deal of our time, namely, enjoying ourselves? Does the concept of sublimation really cover the whole pattern? Can we gain some advantage from an examination of this matter of the possible existence of a place for living that is not properly described by either of the terms ‘inner’ and ‘outer?’” (1971, p. 105). As we know, Winnicott’s studies on the intermediary space consider both the space constructed in the mother–infant relationship, as well as the intermediary space present in the analyst–analysand relationship. According to him, such a space represents



“a third area of human living, one neither inside the individual nor outside in the world of shared reality” (1971, p. 110).

By expanding the Freudian conceptions of unconscious perception and projection, Winnicott overcomes some of the impasses imposed by the representational theory of the psyche proposed by Freud. Without denying the value of the empirical hypotheses that make perception the gateway to finding in the world the objects that already exist within it, or discarding the value of the more idealist extraction hypotheses that make projection the creating and developing mechanism of objects and the world, Winnicott proposes a series of paradoxes as the means of going beyond dualist thought patterns. For him, the psyche simultaneously finds and creates objects and the world. There is also how he expresses himself regarding another of his famous paradoxes: the subjective object is always first in relation to the objective object, but for it to be conceived, the objective object must first exist.

To reach these paradoxes that disorganize the canonical formulations on the nature of reality, the nature of human experience of reality or even on the nature of the forms of human knowledge of reality, Winnicott develops a set of concepts. These are all concepts that seek to describe different maturational stages of human emotional development (and their disturbances), the relationship forms between an infant and its mother (and between the analyst and analysand), between the infant and its first objects and, in a broader sense, they seek to describe and name the forms of relationships between human beings and their environment. Bearing in mind the positive dimensions of illusion and the need to acknowledge the role of creativity in the subjective and intersubjective constitutive processes, Winnicott opts to value and conceptually construct an *in-between* space, which is a space of illusion. This space, which is originally the space for infantile play where it is a pleasure to hide and to be found, is also the place of creativity and the future place of cultural experience. There is no doubt that this is one of the most potent figures of the third in psychoanalysis.

### **The influence of Theodor Reik (and Max Scheler)**

With Winnicott, we have seen the importance of a specific way of conceiving the *third* in psychoanalysis, which deservedly had an impact on the thoughts of Green and Ogden. Now, I would like to present the formulations of one of Winnicott’s contemporaries who, first in Vienna and then in New York, also revisited a notion of the third to advance psychoanalytic ideas. It is my understanding that this author’s work influenced mainly Ogden and his conception of the third analytic subject.

Theodore Reik (1888–1969), in his later years and after 35 years of analytic practice, decided to write a book on the analyst’s psychic experience during psychoanalytic sessions. For him, it was fundamental that, “the psychoanalyst has to learn how one mind speaks to another beyond words and in silence. He must learn to listen ‘with the third ear’” (1948, p. 144). Reik informs us, in a footnote, that he got the ‘third ear’ expression from Niet-

zsche (Aphorism 246, *Beyond Good and Evil*; cf. Naffah Neto, 1993). Reik's idea is that the third ear, the way the analyst listens, has the characteristic of listening to what the analysand says, what he does not say, but feels and thinks, as well as turning toward the inside, listening to the analyst's own internal voices.

As we know, some post-Freudian psychoanalysts went further with Freud's statements that point to a communication among people's unconscious. For example: "that everyone possesses in his own unconscious an instrument with which he can interpret the utterances of the unconscious of other people" (Freud, 1913, pp. 137–8); or: "It is a very remarkable thing that the *Ucs* of one human being can react upon that of another, without passing through the *Cs*." (Freud, 1915, p. 198). Thus, the psychoanalytic ear came to be defined as being fundamentally an unconscious listening to another. For Reik, the *third ear* is how the analyst's unconscious captures the messages sent unconsciously by the analysand:

The analyst hears not only what is in words; he hears also what the words do not say. He listens with the 'third ear', hearing not what the patient speaks but also his own inner voices, what emerges from his own unconscious depths ... It appears to us more important to recognize what speech conceals and what silence reveals.

(Reik, 1948, pp. 125–6)

Thus, with Reik, the attention must focus *primordially* on the analyst's own unconscious, for that is what will hear and understand the analysand. The analyst takes on a very different role than an impartial observer, himself being part of what he observes. In this manner of considering the clinical situation, there are three elements: the analysand's unconscious, the analyst's unconscious and the analyst's consciousness, which observes the communication between their unconscious and develops modes of comprehending what favours, or can favour, the analysand's forms of elaboration. The analyst does not just "capture" the analysand's manifestations, but mainly it is modified by what is in front of him. "In order to comprehend the unconscious of another person, we must, at least for a moment, change ourselves into and become that person" (p. 361). This modality of empathic or vicarious experience is also comprised of three elements: the analysand's experience, the analyst's movement toward the analysand and the possibility of the analyst recognizing himself being another.

Reik states a philosophical influence that was present in the development of these ideas. In the 'The mechanism of anticipation' chapter, from his 1948 book, he refers to the German philosopher Max Scheler: "According to that philosopher there is no psychological *I* and *Thou* phenomenologically; there is only an undifferentiated stream of total psychological happening" (p. 478). Scheler (1971) proposes that from birth, the first thing we perceive around us are expressions. A baby is first sensitive to the expressions of live bodies around it. Only later will the infant be capable of perceiving individual inanimate objects and, so, distinguish its experience of itself from the experience it can have from another. In this sense, it would not be the bodies or egos that we perceive at first, but indivisible totalities instead that,

according to Scheler, would be captured intuitively, fully indistinctly from what would be of the subjective and objective spheres. Thus, if for Scheler we are unable to know the other by his body or consciousness, we can know and recognize him through the expressions he manifests, which make us one with him in an inaugural field of primitive undifferentiation. I consider this detour through philosophy to be fundamental to understanding the context in which Reik formulates his psychoanalytic conception of a ‘communication’ between the unconscious of two persons.

Reik’s understanding is that for the other’s unconscious to be understood, the other must be temporarily “introjected” by the observer:

The medium is the ego, into which the other person is unconsciously introjected. In order to understand another we need not feel our way into his mind but feel him unconsciously in the ego. We can attain to psychological comprehension of another’s unconscious only if it is sized upon our own, at least for a moment, just as if it were a part of ourselves – it is a part of ourselves.

(1948, p. 464)

This position, however, is not complete. To understand another’s unconscious one must introject them into ourselves. But, to introject one must first, in some way, know what is being introjected. Reik then proposes that the other awakens in us, through their words and gestures, an ‘embryo’ of the impulse that motivates them and this is enough, if we are attentive, to comprehend what is happening with them:

through induction of unconscious impulses, the psychical possibilities in the observer’s ego are realized for a moment. In other words, by means of the repressed content in the manifestations of the other person, a latent possibility in the observer’s ego becomes actuated for an instant.

(p. 361)

Or:

What is essential in the psychical process going on in the analyst is – after the stage of observation – that he can vibrate unconsciously in the rhythm of the other person’s impulse and yet be capable of grasping it as something outside himself and comprehending it psychologically, sharing the other’s experience and yet remaining above the struggle, *au-dessus de la mêlée*.

(p. 468)

It is this listening movement that deserves the name of listening with the third ear.

This is the context in which Reik introduces his notion of *unconscious anticipation*, which is based on the anticipation to the other’s emotional reaction to our behaviour, including ‘instinctive’ and ‘rational’ dimensions of anticipation (p. 480). Next (p. 489), he suggests that, on many occasions, what actually operates in these situations is an ‘*introspective unconscious perception*’.

For Reik, this is how the unconscious to unconscious communication is configured, assuming, as pointed out by Laplanche and Pontalis (1998), “the sense of empathy (*Einfühlung*) that would be produced at an infra-verbal level” (pp. 41–2).

In the same way, the analytic process would occur fundamentally at an unconscious level, with the analyst needing to focus his attention more on himself (his own Unconscious) than on the analysand’s manifestations. In the analytic situation there is the analysand, the analyst and the latter’s capacity to hear what is happening in his psyche and, through this, hear what is happening in the analysand’s psyche. As we will see, shortly, many of these ideas will reappear wearing new garments in Thomas Ogden’s original work. First, another detour, this time to the work by the Barangers – other authors amidst the rich landscape of acknowledged or recognizable influences on Green and Ogden.

### The influence of the Barangers

Willy and Madeleine Baranger, originally from France and arriving in Argentina in 1946, where they studied psychoanalysis, constructed a conception of the analytic situation in the beginning of the 1960s that largely prepared the inclusion of the notion of thirdness in contemporary psychoanalysis. In a paper originally published in 1961, the Barangers presented their discomfort with the sidedness of what they called “the primitive descriptions of the analytic situation as a situation of objective observation” (1969/1993, p. 129) by the analyst. The analytic situation is, in fact, a “situation of two extremely connected and complementary people involved in the same dynamic process” (p. 129). The *dynamic field* concept, present in Gestalt psychology and Merleau-Ponty philosophy, can be “applied to the situation created by the analysand and analyst – at least on the descriptive plane – without this implying intent to translate the analytic terminology into another” (p. 129). For them, the analytic situation must be described as having a spatial and temporal structure, being oriented by certain lines of forces and dynamics, having their own laws and purposes.

This field is our immediate and specific object of observation. The analyst’s observation being simultaneously observing the analysand and the correlated self-observation, it can only be defined as the observation of this field.

(p. 130)

The presence of three elements become evident in this description: the analyst’s observation of the analysand’s psyche, his own psyche and the observation of the field. Along this line, they suggest that the psychotherapeutic relationship built in the analytic situation is a bi-personal relationship. But, it also is, or is basically, a “tri-personal relationship, or even a multi-personal one” (p. 132), seeing as the multiple psychic splitting are in perpetual movement, creating a field that is necessarily more complex than a strictly bi-personal field. Therefore, on its own, the introduction of the notion of a field in the panorama of psychoanalytic theory is an indication

that the analytic situation needs three elements to be properly worked through and understood; in other words, the analysand, analyst and the field of forces and feelings made up by the pair. The field is both a result of the analyst and analysand as it is a condition of the possibility of the analytic situation itself.

The Barangers specify that “everything or every occurrence in the field is, at the same time, something else” (p. 133). Thus, they denominated the field’s capacity to be, at the same time, a situation experienced as real by the patient (such as the analyst persecuting him) and a situation not contaminated by these elements (the patient staying in analysis, instead of running away or calling the police) as an “essential ambiguity of the analytic situation”. For them, “it is not just the analyst and the details of the transference relationship that are experienced in the level of ambiguity, but also all the aspects of the analytic field” (p. 134). Furthermore, they point to the fact that “every analyst participates in corporal ambiguity and responds with their own body to the analysand’s unconscious communication” (p. 136). The Barangers develop a precise investigation of the analytic situation, in which the analyst’s body is given particular emphasis: “it can also be seen that the fantasies of bodily movements that appear in the analyst during the session always correspond to the experiences actually lived by the analysand” (pp. 136–7).

Going back to the topic, years later, Willy Baranger (1994) questioned the idea of a

“two body” psychology, as Balint said, through which he sought to avoid various difficulties in maintaining himself at the most evident “bi-personal” – to name the field – level (two people in a consulting room), but did not avoid any difficulty at all, as that which is most immediate and fundamental to unfold in this field is a situation of three, or a triangular one. . . . It is not about two bodies or even two people, but divided subjects, where the division is the result of an initial triangulation.

(Baranger, 1994, p. 369)

I recognize, in this excerpt from Willy Baranger, not just a criticism of the movement in which Balint was one of the pioneers, but a criticism of the limits of his own notion of the dynamic analytic field. As early as in the 1961 text, even though he and Madeleine Baranger sought to go beyond the definition of the analytic situation as a bi-personal therapeutic structure, there was still the problem of how to fit together, in a single theoretical plane, a notion such as that of the dynamic field and the singularities of the analyst’s and analysand’s intrapsychic worlds. The third element, from this point of view, should not cancel out the singularity and specificity of the two main elements. It can be understood as a condition of possibility, as a supplement, as resulting or as an *in-between*; but regardless of the conception, the intrapsychic marks of each of the subjects in the analytic pair should not be substituted by an intersubjective element. It is my understanding that this is the challenge inherited by Ogden and Green based on the legacy of their predecessors in psychoanalysis.

## Ogden and the analytic third

In his book *The matrix of the mind*, published in 1990, Thomas Ogden began to construct, based on Winnicott's ideas of emotional development and a dialectic conception, his notion of thirdness:

The attainment of the capacity to maintain psychological dialectics involves the transformation of the unity that did not require symbols into "three-ness", a dynamic interplay of three differentiated entities.

(Ogden, 1990, p. 213)

For Ogden, these entities are "the symbol (a thought), the symbolized (that which is being thought about) and the interpreting subject (the thinker generating his own thoughts and interpreting his own symbols)" (p. 213). These would be the basic conditions for creativity and the creation of the triangular space; that is, for the installation of Winnicott's potential space. Thus, we have the bases for an innovative notion of thirdness, the *analytic third*.

Ogden stated more than once that he conceived his notion of the analytic third explicitly based on inspiration from Winnicott's work. According to him, in a way analogous to the conception that the mother-infant unit coexists in dynamic tension with the mother and infant as separate subjects, it is possible to propose a comprehension of the analytic situation with the analyst and analysand experiencing the same dynamic tension. In *Subjects of analysis*, a book published in 1994, the notion of the analytic third is presented as follows:

The analytic process reflects the interplay of three subjectivities: the subjectivity of the analyst, of the analysand, and of the analytic third. The analytic third is a creation of the analyst and the analysand, and at the same time the analyst and the analysand (*qua* analyst and analysand) are created by the analytic third. (There is no analyst, no analysand, no analysis in the absence of the third).

(Ogden, 1994, p. 93)

The focus of his investigation is the interpersonal field formed by the analyst and analysand. Far from being an idealized description of the analytic situation, what we see in Ogden's intersubjectivist conception is the exercising of clinical thinking that revisits the Kleinian-Bionian and Winnicottian traditions, with its own style. Three years later, in the preface of his book *Reverie and interpretation*, Ogden (1997) seeks to emphasize the importance of the analyst's unconscious receptivity to the analysand's unconscious life:

Unconscious receptivity of this sort (Bion's state of "reverie") involves (a partial) giving over of one's separate individuality to a third subject, a subject that is neither analyst nor analysand but a third subjectivity unconsciously generated by the analytic pair.

(Ogden, 1997, p. 9)

However, let us return to the 1994 text, highlighting the importance of the Kleinian-Bionian notion of *projective identification* and the use Ogden makes of it at this moment in his work. Projective identification comes to be understood “as a dimension of all intersubjectivity, at times the predominant quality of the experience, at other times only a subtle background” (p. 99). The more complex and conflictive dimensions of the analytic field are restated:

In projective identification, there is a partial collapse of the dialectical movement of individual subjectivity and intersubjectivity and a resultant creation of a subjugating analytic third (within which the individual subjectivities of the participants are to a large degree subsumed). A successful analytic process involves the superseding of the third and the re-appropriation of the (transformed) subjectivities by the participants as separate (and yet interdependent) individuals. This is achieved through an act of mutual recognition that is often mediated by the analyst’s interpretation of the transference-countertransference and the analysand’s use of the analyst’s interpretation.

(1994, p. 106)

Here, we find the traces of Hegel’s influence through the conception of the need for a mutual acknowledgement as the decisive part of the desired changes of an analytic process.

But, the problems faced by Reik in his 1948 book also seem to echo in Ogden’s concerns. The problem that presented itself to the analyst in differentiating between his own emotional reactions, elements that belong exclusively to his own subjectivity and those aroused in him by the analysand now receive a solution fundamentally different than those that can be identified in other authors:

Neither the intersubjectivity of the mother-infant nor that of the analyst-analysand (as separate psychological entities) exists in pure form. . . . In both the relationship of mother and infant and the relationship of analyst and analysand, the task is not to tease apart the elements constituting the relationship in an effort to determine which qualities belong to each individual participating in it; rather, from the point of view of the interdependence of subject and object, the analytic task involves an attempt to describe as fully as one can the specific nature of the experience of the interplay of the individual subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

(Ogden, 1994, p. 64)

Far from a conception of the therapeutic work conceived only based on the relational dimension of the encounter (as in existential-humanistic therapies), Ogden (1997) maintains one of the hallmarks of the classic analytic situation (the asymmetry between the analyst and analysand):

the analytic third is not a single event experienced identically by two people; rather, it is a jointly, but asymmetrically constructed and experienced set of conscious and unconscious intersubjective experiences in which analyst and analysand participate.

(1997, p. 110)

From a realist and/or empirical point of view, even if the analytic situation never stops being a situation of two separate and distinct subjects in communication with each other, what Ogden proposes is that we abandon this point of view in our attempt to understand the analytic phenomena. What for other authors could be thought of as feelings and thoughts *communicated* unconsciously, or unconsciously *induced* by the analysand in the analyst, Ogden describes as feelings and thoughts that are simply *felt* and *thought* by the third intersubjective subject.

The relationship between the analyst and analysand as two wholly constituted and separate subjects continues to happen at the verbal and conscious level. On the other hand, when we consider intersubjectivity from Ogden's point of view, we no longer find the involvement of a *relationship* or *communication*. Intersubjectivity, understood as a 'third intersubjective subject', is not a *relationship between two subjects*, but precisely a *new subject*. That which, from a certain point of view, would happen in the relationship between the subjects, now occurs as the *experience* of the third subject.

The analytic situation as a whole is modified when we consider the *creation of the third*: the analyst and analysand no longer exist as isolated subjects, coming to constitute themselves based on the dialectic (or rather, supplementary – as Derrida suggests, or *dialectic without synthesis*, as proposed by Merleau-Ponty based on Heraclitus of Ephesus) relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. And this dialectic relationship is one of *mutual constitution*, in which it makes no sense to speak of communication or any relationship form between poles purely outside each other. In play in the experience of the analytic third are

symbolic and protosymbolic (sensation-based) forms given to the unarticulated (and often not yet felt) experience of the analysand as they are taking form in the intersubjectivity of the analytic pair (i.e., in the analytic third).

(1994, p. 82)

Yet, Ogden's emphasis is not on the *in-between*, the space between already constituted subjectivities. The question, here, is that Ogden's intersubjectivity does not refer to the *in-between subjectivities*, but on what might be called a primordial intersubjectivity – a situation in which the subjectivities constitute themselves mutually, in a manner whereby the individual subjects do not come before the intersubjectivity or vice versa. This is visible in the fact that the analyst enters into contact with this intersubjective field precisely through "the ways in which he is inextricably given to himself" and through his "very private dimensions" (Reis, 1999, p. 390). And this understanding of intersubjectivity involves a corresponding revision of the concept of individual subjectivity: "The analytic conception of the subject has increasingly become a theory of the interdependence of subjectivity and intersubjectivity" (Ogden, 1994, p. 60).

For Ogden, "the subject cannot create itself; the development of subjectivity requires experiences of specific forms of intersubjectivity" (1994, p. 60). In other words, he agrees with Winnicott:



in the beginning, subjectivity and the individual psyche are not coincident: ‘There is no such thing as an infant’. The constitution of the subject in the space between mother and infant is mediated by such psychological-interpersonal events as projective identification, primary maternal preoccupation, the mirroring relationship, relatedness to transitional objects, and the experiences of object usage and truth.

(1994, p. 60)

Moving along, Ogden suggests that:

the appropriation by the infant of the intersubjective space represents a critical step in the establishment of the individual’s capacity to generate and maintain psychological dialectics (e.g., of consciousness and unconsciousness, of me and not me, of I and me, of I and Thou) through which it is simultaneously constituted and decentred as a subject.

(1994, p. 60)

When Ogden (1994) affirms that, from a certain moment in development, there is an “appropriation of the intersubjective space” by the infant, he suggests that the constitution of subjectivity never ends and that the dialectic between subjectivity and intersubjectivity never interrupts. The same is valid for the analytic process:

The termination of a psychoanalytic experience is not the end of the subject of psychoanalysis. The intersubjectivity of the analytic pair is appropriated by the analysand and is transformed into an internal dialogue (a process of mutual interpretation taking place within the context of a single personality system).

(1994, p. 47)

Ogden is not alone in defending the idea of a pre-subjective and intersubjective level of existence permanently sustaining the existence of the subject as an isolated and defined entity. Bruce E. Reis (1999), for example, has ideas close to Merleau-Ponty’s work, defending that the Hegelian dialectic model, widely used by Ogden, is unable to account for the actual experiences he seeks to describe and comprehend:

the mirroring metaphor [is] problematic for not taking into account the unique subjectivity of the other ... Interdependence established through identification with the other is not yet intersubjectivity. For Hegel, subjectivity remains equated with the conscious subject in competition with the other. By contrast, the model I want to introduce here treats intersubjectivity as such an element and primary condition that competition would already represent a differentiation of subject from object.

(1999, p. 378)

According to Reis (1999), Ogden had overcome both the limits of a model based on a simple mirroring<sup>8</sup> as well as the insufficiency of the Hegelian dialectic relations model:

<sup>8</sup>An overcoming that he also identifies in Winnicott – cf. Reis (1999, pp. 379–84).

the baby is aware of a plurality of subjects in what Ogden termed a “relationship of relative sameness and therefore of relative difference” before being aware of individual subjects. Intersubjective experience precedes personal experience and is ... rooted in bodily experiencing.

(1999, p. 384)<sup>9</sup>

This interpretation by Reis moves in the same direction as the ideas I have been proposing regarding the analytic situation's constituent elements. I fully acknowledge the influence of Ogden's conceptions in my thinking and in the form of my clinical work (cf. Coelho Junior, 2012).

The clinical emphasis of Ogden's thinking gains a counterpoint in Green's more metapsychologically styled thinking. The common sources of inspiration are Winnicott and Hegel. Aspects of Hegel's dialectic conception appear distinctly, as we have seen, in Ogden's propositions (the dialectic between the separate subjectivities of the analyst and analysand generating the third analytic subject), but also in those of Lacan and Green, who appropriate some aspects of Hegel's thinking on the third.<sup>10</sup> However, it is worth noting that, especially for French authors, Hegel's thoughts arrived through A. Kojève's reading, on which historians and commentators of Hegel's work are far from reaching a consensus. But, if Green needed to pass through Lacan (and Bion, to a lesser extent) to arrive at his conception of a psychoanalytic third, Ogden, as we saw also needed to go through Bion (and, to a lesser degree, Lacan).

### André Green and the notion of thirdness

Perhaps more than in other themes approached in his work, the notion of thirdness has placed André Green in front of the need to differentiate his positions from those of Lacan. As with Lacan, Green revisits the ideas of Charles Peirce to introduce his idea of a *third*, but does so to free himself of Lacan's conception of language:

Peirce allowed the possibility of thinking about the relationship between linguistics and semiology, helping us leave the confines in which Lacan had kept us prisoner and allowed us to expand reflection to go beyond language as a system of word representation to semiology equally including thing representation.

(2002, p. 265)

The power of the Peircian notion of the *interpretant* as the third, which is not the person who interprets but a constitutive element of the sign, like the inclusion of instinctive dimensions and feelings in Peirce's theorizing, allowed Green to find the appropriate formulation for his idea of thirdness. For Peirce, the triadic conception of signs is briefly configured in the following manner: *thirdness* is what brings *firstness*, or rather, the emotional and instinctive qualities and the perceptions of undifferentiation, to the

<sup>9</sup>Some of these ideas have already been presented in a more developed form, in Coelho Junior (2002), a text I refer to interested readers.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Macdonald (2014), especially Chapter 3, 'Negation, binding and thirdness: The André Green–Hegel couple'.

interaction with *secondness*, or rather, the qualities of duality, separation and conflict; with this interaction occurring through thought and its capacity to establish laws and generalizations, or rather, the actions of signs and its interpretant force (*thirdness*).

Commenting on Green's development of theory, Fernando Urribarri (2011) suggests that in his work since the 1990s<sup>11</sup> there is the construction of a

*psychoanalytic theory of thirdness*, conceived as the general matrix of meaning. This is a meta-conceptual axis that appropriates from Peirce's semiotics to articulate Green's "tertiary" notions: from the base model of "connection-disconnection-reconnection" symbolisation and the "tertiary processes", to the "generalised theory of triangulation of the substitutable third".

(2011, p. 20)

Also from Urribarri's (2012) point of view: "Thirdness, more than a notion, is a conceptual axis or meta-concept" (p. 156). As a basis for this position, he cites Green (2002) himself:

Extending Lacan's thinking, I realised that the triangular relationships had been arbitrary and negligently restricted to the Oedipus complex. More than the function, it was about the paternal metaphor. This was when C. S. Peirce's work shone a decisive light for me, through his notion of triadic relationships that lead to a more general concept of thirdness. I tried to apply it to ideas I had expressed without referring to a particular theory and to cases I had not analysed from this angle.

(p. 250)

For Urribarri, "Green speaks of 'thirdness configurations' in which we can observe the triadic nature of relationships. In this we can place the oedipal triangle (Freud), Imaginary-Symbolic-Real triad (Lacan) and transitional phenomena (Winnicott)" (2012, pp. 156–7). Under a certain aspect, however, Green seems to emphasize the idea of the third as an *absence* (which, like he says, is an intermediary situation between presence and loss). The third that is an invasive shadow, which participates in the duality's movement since its beginning. For Green, any duality includes a third from the start (the mother–infant relationship always brings a paternal function, even if it is as a representation in the mother's psyche). It is the open triangle with the substitutable third, the other of the object, which can be the father, an uncle or brother, composing the relationship with the mother–infant pair (Green, 1981). But, as Talya Candi (2010) points out:

the real problem ... is not the trajectory that leads from the dyad to the triad, but instead the passage of three potentials (when the father is solely in the maternal thoughts as an amorous bond of reverie) to a real thirdness, where each partner can be separately perceived.

(2010, p. 138)

<sup>11</sup>In one of the resumptions of his journey, which were recurrent during the final decade of his life, Green (2002, p. 265) suggests he became aware of the notion of thirdness relatively late in his psychoanalytic trajectory (1989, "De la tercétité", published in *Les Monographies de la Revue française de psychanalyse*).

And it is here that the third can be a condition of possibility for new paths to the child's subjectivity or else experienced as an impediment of the originating dual completeness. Toward the end of his work, Green comes to write of a ternary structure (*structure ternaire*), that comprises the subject, object and the other of the object.

Green sought to envision a history of the notion of the third in psychoanalysis mainly based on Freud and Winnicott (as did Ogden). Supported by the Winnicottian conception of symbolization, Green insists that the meeting of separate parts (the basis of the notion of symbols) would never be a re-editing or reconstruction of the lost primordial unit, it would necessarily be the creation of a third element that is different from the two separate, and later reunited, parts (Green, 2004, p. 107). In addition to the spatial dimension present in this conception, the temporal dimension (the form of reconnection between two experiences that occur in separate moments) needs to be added. For Green, the symbolic dimension of language fits this point and, thus, the interpretative power in an analytic situation is sustained in the possibility of reconnecting, for example, the subjective to the objective aspects of an experience, generating the production of meaning. Based on this idea of symbols and the Freudian conception of drive movements (*connection* – life instinct and *disconnection* – death instinct), Green proposes the 'connection-disconnection-reconnection' model as one of the initial marks of the formation of his notion of thirdness. Here, through these reconnection/non-connection modalities, Green comes to explore forms of clinical work conceived based on the dual transference relationship – transference onto words and transference onto objects. This configures a way of thinking about the clinical space in its transformational dimensions supported precisely by the forms of connection and mediation between primary and secondary processes carried out by the analyst (the tertiary processes). The notion of *tertiary processes*, which Green (1972 [1995]) defines as "the process that places the primary and secondary processes in a relationship such that the former limit the saturation of the latter and the latter those of the former" (p. 152), is of a primordial nature in his work. He insists that it is necessary to go beyond Freud to be able to conceptually apprehend the complexity of the analytic situation, in particular the constitution of the connective processes occurring in the analytic space.

Green (2003) takes up the story of the 1940s conflicts between Kleinians and Freudians (the 'controversial discussions') to affirm:

Fortunately, this duel gave rise to a third production, that of Donald Winnicott, who refused to be confined by the dichotomy between the internal and external, and focused on the transitional space. Yet again, thirdness was the solution, because it is true that the analytic space is not under the rule of the internal or external worlds.

(2003, p. 46)

Giving continuity to this line of ideas and including the power of the notions of absence, virtuality and potentiality, Green comes to also consider the analytic frame as a third. It is a third that composes the complexity of

the analytic situation with the transference-countertransference duality. Besides, as Delourmel (2005) has already pointed out, “for André Green, the analytic frame must be conceived as a psychoanalytic apparatus whose function is the transformation of the psychic apparatus into the language apparatus” (p. 335). The analytic frame depends, however, on the conditions of the analyst maintaining the metamorphosing instance, the paternal instance and the *symbolic function of thirdness*, which design successful analysis. This is also, within this theme, about the forming condition of the analyst’s internal frame (2010, p. 128). As Green indicates, it is the frame that was internalized over the course of the analyst’s own analysis and that, especially in psychotherapy work with the need for a modified frame (for example, face-to-face sessions), becomes decisive. For this, Green considers the third of the frame to be mainly compatible with absence, potentiality and virtuality.

Finally, as I have already indicated, for Green, thirdness is a fundamental notion in psychoanalytic theory that came in response, or in opposition to, the predominance of dual relationships as the basis for all psychoanalytic thinking, establishing itself since the 1940s with the emphasis on mother–infant relationship studies and the focus on studies of the so-called ‘pre-Oedipal’ period of psychic development. This is why, for him, two is always already three. It is my understanding that, in Green’s work, the notion of thirdness occupies a central position in the metapsychological conception on subjective constitution and in the study of psychopathological disturbances, especially the non-neuroses. Green, interested in the clinical aspects of borderline states and severe patients, organizes clinical thinking that seeks to account for disturbances in the narcissistic-identity dimension and, for that, the notion of thirdness would be fundamental. As Octavio Souza (2013) has already suggested:

[Green] follows the post-Freudian proposals of modifying the analytic method to the treatment of non-neurosis conditions, but values, further developing the intuitions of Winnicott and Bleger, the function of analytic framing, a function that introduces the dimension of the third in comprehending the analyst-analysand relationship, a comprehension that is traditionally formulated by post-Freudian authors in the most dual terms of object relations and countertransference. In this line, he values the importance of the psychoanalytic construction and the imaginative participation of the analyst to symbolise the traumatic experiences of object failures.

(2013, pp. 167–8)

Within this context, Green’s notion of thirdness encounters Ogden’s analytic third. It is in the clinical space, in the conflicts to meet the demands of difficult cases, that both Green and Ogden unveil the greatest importance of the notion of a third.

### Final considerations

It is clear that both Green and Ogden bring the notion of the *third* in psychoanalysis to a level of considerable theoretical complexity. More so than the differences that characterize their respective positions, we must

recognize the influence of their ideas in the entirety of contemporary psychoanalytic practice. Thus, in ending, I would like to reorder the ten figures of the third presented at the beginning of this paper into four dimensions, seeking to emphasize the elements that, in my opinion, are central to Ogden's and Green's constructs. These dimensions are simultaneously conceptual and clinical, in the measure that they appear as possibilities of the functioning of the third in the transferential-counter-transferential dynamic.

The first dimension is that of the *in-between*. The third, in this case, functions as an element of separation or (re)connection. It is the inaugural condition, the primordial function of a third, which opens into two what functioned psychically as an undifferentiated unit and allows for triangulation. The second dimension is that of the third as a *supplement* or as *absence*. It is a constitutive function of the early triangulation that places limits on the saturation of duality's constituent elements, but is not an in-between; instead, it is more an absent power that produces effects both in the intrapsychic dimensions of the analyst and analysand, as in the field formed within an analytic situation. Classically, the third appears as the absent element that configures a constitutive psychic presence of the field. The next dimension of thirdness is when it can be conceived as the *condition of possibility* for the primary duality. In other words, the third in this case is constitutive of duality; it is the originating condition, a kind of primary undifferentiation that allows the emergence of the analyst's and analysand's singularities in the analytic field. For me, the fourth dimension is the third as *resulting* from the dynamic between the two primary elements; it is the effect or consequence of the dynamic. In this last case, the third is the product; it is what is created from the dynamic between the analyst and analysand in the analytic field; it is the transformations produced in the field.

The last two dimensions are very evident in Ogden's notion of the analytic third, forming what he calls dialectic between the subjectivities and intersubjectivity, which is a central characteristic of his analytic third. The first two are more present in Green's positions and in the forms of how he conceives the subjective constitution and its impasses. Evidently, each one of the forms of subjective constitution and its difficulties that determine different psychopathological formations are fundamental elements in Green's comprehension of the modalities of how the analyst acts in the different clinical situations formed with each analysand. However, as the four dimensions presented here are not mutually exclusive, I think we can think of them as simultaneous functions, present in our psychoanalytic practice and theory, at times with greater emphasis on one, at times on another.

So it is that, more than being just creative and potent theoretical contributions, Ogden's and Green's notions of thirdness possess great clinical fertility. And, this is where the most fascinating of all the adventures inspired by these two authors begins; that is, the adventure of making each clinical encounter a discovery and the renewal necessary to sustain the wealth of contemporary psychoanalysis.

## References

- Aron L (1996). *A meeting of minds: Mutuality in psychoanalysis*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.
- Balint M (1952/1985). *Primary love and psycho-analytic technique*, London: Karnac Books.
- Baranger M (1993). The mind of the analyst: from listening to interpretation. *Int J Psychoanal* **74**:15–24.
- Baranger W (1994). Processo en Espiral y Campo Dinâmico, In: Baranger W, de Goldstein RZ, Goldstein N, editors. *Artesanias Psicoanalíticas*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Kargieman.
- Baranger W, Baranger M (1969/1993). *Problemas del Campo Psicoanalítico*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Kargieman.
- Bleger J (1967). Psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic frame. *Int J Psychoanal* **48**:511–19.
- Britton R (1989). The missing link: Parental sexuality in the Oedipus complex. In: Steiner J, editor. *The Oedipus complex today*, 83–101. London: Karnac Books.
- Britton R (1998). Subjectivity, objectivity and triangular space. In: Britton R, editor. *Belief and imagination*. London: Routledge.
- Britton R (2003). *Sex, death, and the superego: Experiences in psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac Books.
- Candy T (2010). *O duplo limite. O aparelho psíquico de André Green*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- Caper R (1997). As Contribuições de Hanna Segal às Teorias de Formação de Símbolos e Criatividade. *Revista Brasileira de Psicanálise* **XXXI**(4):889–906.
- Coelho Junior N (1995). *A Força da Realidade na Clínica Freudiana*. São Paulo: Editora Escuta.
- Coelho Junior N (2002). Intersubjetividade: conceito e experiência em psicanálise. *Psicologia Clínica* **14**(1):61–74. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia de Freud/PUC-RIO.
- Coelho Junior N (2004). Prefácio. In: Barone KC, editor. *Realidade e Luto: um estudo da transicionalidade*, 11–17. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Coelho Junior N (2010). Da intercorporeidade à co-corporeidade: elementos para uma clínica psicanalítica. *Revista Brasileira de Psicanálise* **44**(1):51–60.
- Coelho Junior N (2012). Intersubjetividade e Corporeidade: dimensões da clínica psicanalítica. In: Coelho Junior N, Salem P, Klautau P, editors, 71–88. *As Dimensões da Intersubjetividade*. São Paulo: FAPESP/Escuta.
- Coelho Junior N, Figueiredo LC (2003). Patterns of intersubjectivity in the constitution of subjectivity: Dimensions of otherness. *Culture and Psychology* **9**(3):193–208.
- Delourmel C (2005). Quelques figures de la tiercéité. In: Richard F, Urribarri F, editors. *Autour de l'oeuvre d'André Green*, 327–41. Paris: PUF.
- Freud S (1913). The disposition to obsessional neurosis. *The Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 10. New York: Pelican Books, 1983.
- Freud S (1915). The unconscious. *The Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 11. New York: Pelican Books, 1983.
- Freud S (1917). Carta a Groddeck, 5 de junho de 1917, In: S. Freud /G. Groddeck, *Correspondência*, 37–40. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1977.
- Green A (1972 [1995]). Notes sur le processus tertiaires. Colóquio SPP. In: *André Green, Propédeutique. La Métapsychologie revisitée*, 151–5. Seyssel: Editions Champ Vallon, 1995.
- Green A (1974). L'analyst, la symbolization et l'absence. In: Green A, editor. *La folie privée: psychanalyse des cas-limites*, 73–119, 1990. Paris: Gallimard.
- Green A (1975). The analyst, symbolisation and absence in the analytic setting (On changes in analytic practice and analytic experience). *Int J Psychoanal* **56**:1–22.
- Green A (1989). De la tiercéité. *Les Monographies de la Revue française de psychanalyse*. Paris: P.U.F.
- Green A (2002). *Idées directrices pour une psychanalyse contemporaine*. Paris: P.U.F.
- Green A (2003). *André Green e a Fundação Squiggle*. São Paulo: Roca.
- Green A (2004). Thirdness and psychoanalytic concepts. *Psychoanal Q* **LXXIII**(1):99–135.
- Green A (2005). Adieu à Deauville. *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* **LXIX**(3):677–82.
- Green A (2010). *Illusions et désillusions du travail psychanalytique*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- Laplanche J, Pontalis JB (1998). *Vocabulário da Psicanálise*, São Paulo: Ed. Martins Fontes.
- Macdonald M (2014). *Hegel and psychoanalysis: A new interpretation of 'Phenomenology of Spirit'*. New York: Routledge.
- Masson JM (1986). *A Correspondência Completa de Sigmund Freud para Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago.
- Naffah Neto A (1993). O terceiro ouvido – Nietzsche e o enigma da linguagem. *Cadernos de Subjetividade* (Revista do Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisa da Subjetividade, Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados em Psicologia Clínica da PUC-SP), **1**(2):151–6.
- Ogden T (1990). *The matrix of the mind: Object relations and the psychoanalytic dialogue*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Ogden T (1994). *Subjects of analysis*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

- Ogden T (1997). *Reverie and interpretation*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Pontalis JB (1977). *Entre le rêve et la douleur*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Reik T (1948). *Listening with the third ear*. New York: The Noonday Press.
- Reis B (1999). *Thomas Ogden's phenomenological turn*. *Psychoanal Dial* 9(3):3371–93.
- Revue Française de Psychanalyse (2005). 'Le Tiers Analytique'. LXIX(3), Juin, Paris: P.U.F.
- Rickman J (1951). Methodology and research in psycho-pathology. In: Rickman J, editor. *Selected contributions to psycho-analysis*, 2003. London: Karnac Books.
- Scheler M (1971). *Nature et Formes de la Sympathie*. Lefebvre M, translator. Paris: Payot.
- Segal H (1957). Notes on symbol formation. *Int J Psychoanal* 38:391–7.
- Segal H (1978). On symbolism. *Int J Psychoanal* 55:315–19.
- Souza O (2013). A reviravolta dos anos 20 e abertura do diafragma da teoria. In: *Percurso XXV*(49-50):164–9.
- Urribarri F (2011). Préface: L'Inconscient et le langage dans la psychanalyse contemporaine. In: Green A, editor. *Du Signe au Discours*, 9–27. Paris: Ithaque.
- Urribarri F (2012). André Green: o pai na teoria e na clínica contemporânea. *Jornal de Psicanálise* 45(82):143–59.
- The Psychoanalytic Quarterly (2004). 'The third in psychoanalysis', LXXIII (1), January, New York.
- Winnicott DW (1971). *Playing and reality*. Hove: Bruner-Routledge, 2004.