

## December 2017, Volume 77, Issue 4

### Section Introduction:

Koritar, E. (2017). Shining a Psychoanalytic Light on Alienation, Otherness, and Xenophobia. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 341–346.

Psychoanalytic insights about the human mind, the internal world, and object relations, gleaned through our psychoanalytic work on the couch, have enriched our understanding of individual dynamics and the relationship with the outside world. Psychoanalytic concepts and mode of thinking may also be usefully applied to deriving models of understanding current events, phenomena, and crises in the social, political, and cultural media. Just as psychoanalytic theory has brought light to the dark reaches of the unconscious mind, it might help to enlighten us about the dynamics of alienation, otherness, and xenophobia that we are witnessing in the current crisis of mass emigration, and its xenophobic reaction in the “welcoming” countries...

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### Articles:

DeMasi, F. (2017). Some Paths Towards Psychotic Alienation. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp 347–358.

**Abstract:** In this paper I use the term *alienation* to describe the mind’s detachment from psychic reality and its withdrawal into an alien world that leads to progressive dehumanization. In spite of this phenomenon having a psychodynamic nosography and descriptive models that effectively reveal it in detail, mental alienation is still mysterious and unsettling, especially when it manifests all of a sudden in clinical work. Alienating withdrawal into sensory fantasizing, which causes increasing loss of contact with human reality, is often preceded by a long period of time spent in a dissociated world that has gradually replaced psychic reality. However, prior to the human world being completely replaced by the alien world, both worlds coexisted for a considerable length of time in the patient’s mind. My hypothesis is that the dissociation from psychic reality that underlies the future state of psychotic alienation occurs in psychic withdrawal that begins in infancy. This mental state is particularly obvious in small children who constantly live in a fantasy world.

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Varvin, S. (2017). Our Relations to Refugees: Between Compassion and Dehumanization. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 359–377.

Abstract: After the so-called refugee crisis of 2015–2016 European reactions to foreigners had come to the fore and we are seeing xenophobic political and populist movements become increasingly mainstream. The massive rejection of refugees/asylum seekers taking place has made their conditions before, during and after flight, increasingly difficult and dangerous. This paper relates current xenophobia to historical attitudinal trends in Europe regarding Islam, and claims that a much more basic conflict is at work: the one between anti-modernism/traditionalism and modernism/globalization. Narratives on refugees often relate them to both the foreign (Islam) and to “trauma”. In an environment of insecurity and collective anxiety, refugees may represent something alien and frightening but also fascinating. I will argue that current concepts and theories about “trauma” or “the person with trauma” are insufficient to understand the complexity of the refugee predicament. Due to individual and collective countertransference reactions, the word “trauma” tends to lose its theoretical anchoring and becomes an object of projection for un-nameable anxieties. This disturbs relations to refugees at both societal and clinical levels and lays the groundwork for the poor conditions that they are currently experiencing. Historically, attitudes towards refugees fall somewhere along a continuum between compassion and rejection/dehumanization. At the moment, they seem much closer to the latter. I would argue that today’s xenophobia and/or xeno-racism reflect the fact that, both for individuals and for society, refugees have come to represent the Freudian Uncanny/*das Unheimliche*.

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Kogan, I. (2017). Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 378–391.

Abstract: This paper explores the link between anti-Semitism and xenophobia from a psychoanalytic prism. The author claims that anti-Semitism is a particular form of xenophobia directed against Jews, with some unique characteristics. She first introduces some basic notions about xenophobia, and then discusses the origins of anti-Semitism as they are viewed in early psychoanalytic thinking and in contemporary psychoanalysis. The article explores the nature of anti-Semitism in society today, and presents some reflections on the interplay between anti-Semitism and other kinds of xenophobia.

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Miller, J. (2017). I Am a Mystery to Myself. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 392–398.

Abstract: Throughout my lifetime I have had a vague sense of my identity. There were no distinct memories or stories from my childhood and adolescence to provide me with the recognition, much less an appreciation, for who I was in the world. It wasn’t until I entered psychotherapy that revelations about my family life came into understanding. This was not from any recollecting of actual events but from the indirect observations of families where being engaged with each other had occurred. Through psychoanalysis, reading a variety of psychoanalytic thinkers, and by taking up my own writing I was encouraged to discover myself, even at the cost of the sorrow of never having that

encouragement in growing up, the cost that comes with the exploration. Where no childhood home was to be found a new one was to be created instead.

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Atwood, G. E. (2017). There Must Be Blood. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 399–405.

Abstract: It is argued that in the effective psychotherapy of patients suffering with severe trauma, there is always blood that is shed. This blood may be metaphorical but is often literal. In its absence, it is unlikely that anything of real value has occurred.

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Antonelli, M. (2017). Moral Injury. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 406–416.

Abstract: The devastating effect on the self of moral injury, often a core component of trauma, occurring when one's actions have profoundly violated one's code of ethics, when one has been a victim of such violation, or when one has been a passive witness, has been extensively explored as it has occurred in veterans of the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Two examples illustrate its prevalence in civilian life. The literature shows violation of expected empathy from and for others, inherent in our nature, is more devastating than violation of the ethical code of our culture or sub-culture, adherence to which becomes urgent as our need emerges to belong to the culture or subculture of which we are a part, values which often contradict our innate sense of "what is right."

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Bacciagaluppi, M. (2017). Pierre Janet and Auguste Forel: Two Historical Contributions. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 417–439.

Abstract: This paper discusses two 19th century French-speaking authors, Pierre Janet and Auguste Forel, who both employed hypnosis and in various ways were early influences on psychoanalysis. To acquaint the reader with the clinical works of these pioneers, a long case history by Janet, and a case history by Forel are presented. The connections between these two authors and modern developments are discussed. Both historical figures were contemporaries of Freud and their at times contentious relationships became part of their legacy.

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### **Book Reviews:**

Miller, I. S. (2017). Book Review. *Immigrants and Refugees: Trauma, Personal Mourning, and Border Psychology*, by Vamik D. Volkan, Karnac, London, 2017, 118pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 440–443.

It is a late afternoon in high summer. The tax-free zone of the Northern European airport is heaving with humanity. Some jostling, some sauntering, others assessing the wares: the cigarettes, chocolates, and discounted liquors. Mirrored sunglasses are displayed on video screens against hang-gliders and California surfers, smiling at us from halfway around the world. Attractive boutiques feature Danish cafetieres, Italian handbags, and Chinese silks. The seats in the food court are full; and the tables are filthy with litter as customers sipping designer coffees turn their attentions in competitive search for an available power point to charge their electronic devices...

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Molofsky, M. (2017). Book Review. *Shared Traumas, Silent Loss, Public and Private Mourning*, edited by Lene Auestad, Karnac Books Ltd., London, 2017, 197pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 444–447.

This book on the subject of trauma, loss, and mourning, is necessary, because it addresses devastating human experience that needs to be understood from a psychoanalytic perspective. It grew out of a conference, “Psychoanalysis and Politics,” held at the Swedish Psychoanalytic Society, and is compelling and challenging. That it is sometimes painful to read attests to the authenticity and depth of the contributions by ten very focused authors. The book indeed is a major contribution to the psychoanalytic literature on trauma...

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Covitz, H. (2017). Book Review. *The Parnas: A Scene from the Holocaust*, by Silvano Arieti, Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia, PA, 2000, 158pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 448–450.

Reviewing psychoanalytic books began for me as a personal journey after reading paradoxically different views of a book that I had authored in the 1990’s. I found it difficult to discern a thread binding one review to another or sometimes even to recognize my own thinking/writing in the mind of a reviewer’s hindsight or high-ground which that reviewer’s wisdom brought to the conversation. I decided to pen reviews solely as subjective attempts to respectfully enter the author’s boat and row a little in their style ... at least, as I introjected it in the process of reading. I refused to review books that I couldn’t admire. I sought to be a friendly interloper into the labors of another who had spent, at the very least, many months sculpting their ideas ... gestating them. Psychoanalysis is, after all and beyond its technical and clinical contributions, a study of and about love...

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Rachmani V. (2017). Book Review. *Psychoanalysis in an Age of Accelerating Cultural Change: Spiritual Globalization*, by Neil Altman, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2015, 140pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 451–453.

Neil Altman’s deep concern for an enlarged role for psychoanalysis, well beyond the walls of private practice—whether as nearby as at a hospital clinic in the South Bronx or as far afield as in Portugal and Chile—is widely evident in this his third book. Here he spotlights two interconnected themes: the psychoanalytic profession’s dearth of cultural competence within a reassembling world order and its collective blindness to how radical socio-economic developments are having direct and indirect negative impingements on the already diminished access to mental healthcare around the world...

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Friedman, H. J. (2017). Book Review. *Journeys in Psychoanalysis: The Selected Works of Elizabeth Spillius*, by Elizabeth Spillius, Routledge, East Sussex and New York, 2016, 192pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(4), pp. 454–457.

The attitude towards Kleinian theory among psychoanalysts in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s could best be characterized as dismissive, trending towards overt hostility. At a time when most psychoanalysts trained in American Psychoanalytic Association Institutes were required to be physicians the idea that the brain of an infant could support a fantasy life such as the one outlined by Klein seemed absurd and incompatible with our knowledge of biology. No one of any standing would risk their professional reputation by acknowledging even an interest in what Melanie Klein had contributed to the literature regarding the “primitive mind” of the child...

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