

March 2017, Volume 77, Issue 1

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Trauma and Subjectivity: A South American Perspective

Issue Editor: Jô Gondar

Gondar, J. (2017). Trauma and subjectivity: a South American perspective. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 1–6.

Is there South American psychoanalysis?

I believe that it would be too simplistic to qualify the diversity in the field of psychoanalysis on a purely geographical basis, considering the frontiers of each continent or each country. Nevertheless, one can identify differences in the reception, the inflection, and in the privileged aspects of the theory and analytical practice in distinct regions of the world. There are basic concepts and principles in psychoanalysis, but they acquire individual characteristics upon landing in each place...

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Articles:

Volnovich, J. C. (2017). Trauma and Contemporary Forms of Subjectivity: Contributions of Argentine Psychoanalysis. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 7–22.

Abstract: This paper offers arguments to justify the relevance of psychoanalysis—*psychoanalyses*—in present-day Argentina and reflects on the stance taken by psychoanalysts with different theoretical perspectives in the face of the havoc wreaked by state terror (1976–1983). To this end, the author focuses on the pioneers' traits, the significance of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association in the 1950s and 1960s, and the impact of the departure of the Plataforma Group in 1971. The establishment of the latter opened the way for the development of a psychoanalysis tied to popular movements, sensitive to social conflict, and close to human rights organizations. The author explores both on psychoanalysts' intervention to address the social trauma resulting from the theft of babies during the dictatorship, and on their relationship with Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.

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Flores, J. (2017). Clinical Praxis and the Place of the Analyst: A Chilean Perspective *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 23–39.

Abstract: Since its inception, psychoanalytic theory has considered that, conceptually, it is impossible to maintain the division between the individual and society and that the constitution of one necessarily involves the other. Despite this clear legacy of Freudian thought, followed by most of the first and second generations of psychoanalysts, analytic clinical practice started to change almost exclusively into private practice by later generations of psychoanalysts. As a result, a space for information, data gathering, and theoretical production has been gradually configured that is structured in a slanted way. An analytic working environment has thus developed in Chile that tends to eschew contributions from other disciplines that could both enrich and challenge psychoanalytic theoretical–technical developments.

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Viñar, M. N. (2017). The Enigma of Extreme Traumatism: Trauma, Exclusion and their Impact on Subjectivity. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 40–51.

Abstract: My aim is to discuss the immediate effects of extreme trauma and to speculate on its long term effects. The formulations associated with the Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome generate an overly medicalized view of trauma, grossly underestimating its devastating impact. Catastrophic traumatic experience rips a hole in the representational continuity of psychic life; neither representations nor narrations are generated. Instead, a representational emptiness occurs, such that what has taken place cannot be shared or transmitted. The cathartic word becomes a robotic mocking of the interchange between human beings. There is no internalization, no ability to make the experience subjective. The resulting deep splitting in the psyche is characteristic of extreme traumatism, and its balance or perpetual working through is elaborated in this paper.

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Gondar, J. (2017). Between Psychoanalysis and Testimonial Space: The Analyst as a Witness. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 52–63.

Abstract: The aim of this article is to think of the place of the witness as a third place that the analyst, in the clinical space of trauma, is able to sustain. According to Ferenczi, in traumatic dreams a third is already being summoned. It is not the witness of the realm of law, nor the place of the father or the symbolic law. This is a third space that can be called potential, interstitial space, indeterminate and formless, where something that at first would be incommunicable circulates and gradually takes shape. This space allows and supports the literalness of a testimonial narrative, its hesitations, paradoxes and silences. More than a trauma theory, the notion of a potential space would be the great contribution of psychoanalysis to the treatment of trauma survivors, establishing the difference between the task of a psychoanalyst and the one of a truth commission.

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Schueler Reis, E. (2017). So, Doctor, Now, What Do I Do? *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 64–77.

Abstract: This paper proposes a discussion about *acting* on the therapeutic relationship using the notions of playing and the “use of an object” formulated by Winnicott; the formulations of Ferenczi as the concepts of introjection and the “ability to feel with”, as well as the concept of cartography from Deleuze and Guattari. It discusses how to manage the meeting with individuals who confront the analyst with sudden questions, gestures and actions. I propose that the management of the *acting* considers that there is a call for a conversation in which “doing” is in question, and in which the playful dimension of activities without rules is employed as a necessary option.

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Brief Communication:

Atwood, G. E. The Bloody Amputation: A Discussion of a First Dream in an Analysis. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 78–82.

In a seminar taught by a psychoanalyst early in my clinical training, it was said that every psychotherapist should pay special attention to the first dream the patient presents. This dream, our instructor explained, will symbolically forecast the content and course of the analysis as a whole. I was skeptical that this could be the case, but I have to say that his idea has been largely borne out in my clinical experience over the last half-century...

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Book Reviews:

Vida, J. E. (2017). Book Review. *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume I: Sigmund Freud and Emma Eckstein*, by Carlo Bonomi, Routledge, Sussex and New York, 2015, 288pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 83–86.

This is the first of two metaphorically archeological volumes by the Italian psychoanalyst, Carlo Bonomi, who for decades has been digging beneath the foundational hagiographies of psychoanalysis. The second, *Volume 2: Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi* is not yet available, though there is an English précis of *Volume I* and a tantalizing table of contents of *Volume 2* on Dr. Bonomi’s website. Although identified as Volume 65 of the relational perspectives book series, *Volume I* is not easily obtainable. The language of the text has some awkward usages and is occasionally garbled, which, along with some careless copy-editing, makes the whopping price something of a sore point...

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Dimitrijevic, A. (2017). Book Review. *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1: Sigmund Freud and Emma Eckstein*, by Carlo Bonomi, Routledge, Sussex and New York, 288pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 87–90.

In the beginning, there was Roazen (1975, 1995) and he spread light onto the psychoanalytic community deeply immersed in idolizing Freud. Then historiography of psychoanalysis started becoming more objective and accurate. The invaluable work of Ellenberger (1970) was published; Sulloway (1992) challenged most of the conceptions we held dear; Breger (2000) and Rudnytsky (2002, 2011) showed us clearly that Freud's troubled and unanalyzed personality frequently stood in the way to the further development of the scientific discipline he had founded. And then, upon reading *Revolution in Mind* by Makari (2008), I felt the field might be exhausted: the history of early psychoanalysis, it seemed to me, could not contain any further significant mysteries...

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Rothschild, L. (2017). Book Review. *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1: Sigmund Freud and Emma Eckstein*, by Carlo Bonomi, Routledge, Sussex & New York, 2015, 288pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 91–96.

Twelve black and white reproductions may be found in Carlo Bonomi's *The Cut and the Building of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1: Sigmund Freud and Emma Eckstein*. One of these, *The Legend of the Bishop and the Devil*, is a painting dated 1854 by Moritz von Schwind that depicts a devil carrying stones to build a chapel while a bishop prays at the chapel's edifice. Bonomi reminds us that at a meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association Freud spoke of identifying with the devil's heavy lifting and rough work of laying stones for the psychoanalytic foundation, and that others, like the bishop had benefited.

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Koritar, E. (2017). Book Review. *Reading Italian Psychoanalysis*, edited by Franco Borgogno, Alberto Luchetti and Luisa Marino Coe, Routledge, London and New York, 2016, 738pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 77(1), pp. 97–104.

In *Reading Italian Psychoanalysis*, Franco Borgogno, Alberto Luchetti, and Luisa Marino Coe have presented to the non-Italian speaking psychoanalytic readers a broad survey, from earliest beginnings to contemporary contributors, of a psychoanalytic canon of works that adds a uniquely Italian perspective to the theory and practice of psychoanalysis.

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