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Special Issue: Aftermath of Trauma. Vancouver Conference 2020

Annual Holocaust Day Commemoration at the Freud Museum

Volkan, V. D. (2021). **Trauma, Prejudice, Large-Group Identity and Psychoanalysis.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 137–154.

Abstract: Escaping Nazi annexation of Austria, Sigmund Freud and his family left there in 1938 to live the rest of their lives in exile in the house now known as the Freud Museum in London. This paper is based upon the author's Holocaust Day Memorial Lecture delivered virtually at this museum on January 27, 2021, which marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. Besides remembering those who were lost during World War II, the content of this paper includes a description of different types of massive traumas, with a focus on disasters at the hand of the Other, and their impact on individuals and large groups. Sigmund Freud's ideas about relationships between communities and countries with adjoining territories, as well as large-group psychology, are updated, and individuals' and large groups' needs to grasp onto large-group identities is explained and illustrated with case reports.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09285-z>

Aftermath of Trauma. Vancouver Conference 2020

Articles:

Koritar, E. (Issue Editor) (2021). **Introduction to the Special Issue.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 155–163.

Psychoanalytic praxis has evolved since Freud first established the basic tenets of standard technique in his Technical Papers (1912), as clinicians applied analytic concepts in their work with patients but were challenged by more regressed patients who were non-responsive to standard technique. Whereas patients with a core neurotic personality structure readily responded to the standard approach, those who formed narcissistic transferences (schizophrenias, autistic spectrum disorders, psychoses, moderate to severe personality disorders, and PTSD) were not considered amenable to analytic technique. Yet given the great demand for finding effective treatment modalities for the latter group, psychoanalytic researchers (Eissler, 1953; Ferenczi, 1930; Kernberg, 1976; Kohut, 1977; Stone, 1954) have proposed variations of standard technique that may be useful in working with this more regressed patient population. As technical advances in analytic practice made analytically informed treatment more available to more regressed patients, analysts have expanded their theoretical research and have proposed conceptual revisions of the metapsychology underlying the psychopathology they witness in their clinical

work. In this context, the impact of environmental trauma on self development and its significance in developmental arrests and resulting psychopathology continue to be of interest.

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Levine, H. B. (2021). **Further Thoughts on Trauma, Process and Representation.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 164–177.

Abstract: Beginning with Freud, throughout his work and in most if not all psychoanalytic formulations, the concept of trauma has been associated with the disruptive effects of excess excitation on psychic regulatory processes and psychic development. Foremost among these are the capacities for emotional containment and representation. The restoration, strengthening or acquisition for the first time of these capacities can take place intersubjectively in a successful analytic therapy and lies at the heart of the therapeutic action.

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Thompson, D. (2021). **Discussion of Howard B. Levine’s Paper: Further Thoughts on Trauma, Process and Representation.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 178–185.

One’s Emanating Inter-Subjective Beauty

I am pleased to be able to discuss the paper, Further Thoughts on Trauma, Process and Representation, from our esteemed colleague, Dr. Howard Levine. He offers a novel perspective on trauma, one that highlights the massive damage that can be done to one’s “elaborative possibilities” (Potamianou, 2015). Levine goes on to emphasize the need for an ontological, intersubjective psychoanalysis; one in which meaning, beginning unconsciously, can be both regenerated and generated (in the case of un-represented conditions) between the patient-analyst couple; and where human beings may creatively discover meaning in the here-and-now of the session, thereby entering into a state of being and becoming revived and altogether alive. I will start with a summary, and in the spirit of what Levine calls our “representational imperative” (Levine, 2012), I will mention a few further thoughts and images that popped up as I read his text, with special attention to his clinical vignette from his work with his patient—“Thomas.”

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09291-1>

Eekhoff, J. K. (2021). **No Words to Say It: Trauma and Its Aftermath.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 186–206.

Abstract: Trauma survivors suffer from unmediated access to primal undifferentiated positions of the psyche. This access, unmediated by symbolic representation, but represented in the body, disrupts the normal trajectory of development and of

relationship. Survivors have no words to communicate this experience. Without words, trauma torments them, because it cannot be borne, grieved, and released. Without access to the usual defenses against unpleasant feelings and ideas, survivors are left isolated and confused, unable to enjoy their lives. These primal states are an aftermath of trauma resistant to treatment because they are outside the symbolic positions of the mind. A clinical example is used to demonstrate the loss of language during breakdown and the function action serves in analytic sessions.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09288-w>

Setton-Markus, J. (2021). **Discussion of Judy Eekhoff’s Paper: No Words to Say It: Trauma and Its Aftermath.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 207–213.

The tonality, rhythm and emotionality in Eekhoff’s paper impresses us with her extraordinary capacity to take deep within herself the suffering her patients bring to her. In her writing style she conveys how much she prizes emotional receptivity as a valuable psychoanalytic tool, especially when working with traumatic states.

In her opening statement, “Life is difficult enough without trauma,” Eekhoff (2021) underscores the fact that we are all emotional creatures, and as such, experience moments in our lives in which our own primal affects emerge and disturb us, and confront us with the challenging task of having to work our way through them and make meaning of them. We strive to create our own containing narratives, and, if our narratives are founded in the search for truth, we learn from experience (Bion, 1962a). I use truth in the sense described by Civitarese as “the emotionally lived experience in the here and now” (2016, p. 450). When truth is so unbearable that it can elude us, we need the reverie of another mind, in the here and now, to help us along.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09286-y>

Scarfone, D. (2021). **Trauma, Subjectivity and Subjectality.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 214–236.

Abstract: Taking a critical stand on contemporary trends in psychoanalysis regarding trauma, the author addresses the problem of psychic trauma mainly in terms of how it affects the patient’s status as a subject. After reexamining the notions of subject and subjectivity, the author illustrates the usefulness of the notion of “subjectality,” defined as a critical moment of subjectivity, necessary for processing the consequences of trauma. A clinical illustration is provided.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09292-0>

Koritar, E. (2021). **Discussion of Dominique Scarfone's Paper: Trauma, Subjectivity, and Subjectality.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 237–243.

The Nature of the Trauma

Scarfone's (2021) in-depth scrutiny of the nature of trauma and its impact on the ego² invites debate from different theoretical perspectives. In my discussion, I will reference Ferenczi's ideas on the impact of trauma on the developing ego, as he outlined in *The Confusion of Tongues (COT)* (1933) and *The Clinical Diary* (1932).

The major rift between Freud and Ferenczi occurred over Ferenczi's presentation of COT at the 1932 Wiesbaden IPA conference. Freud had asked Ferenczi not to present his paper which purported to rehabilitate trauma as central in the cause of psychopathology. This flew in the face of orthodox psychoanalytic theory that anxiety was interpreted as a signal to the ego that UCS drive derivatives were surfacing from the Id, and anxiety was experienced as a result of the preconscious awareness of repressed unconscious phantasy. Subsequently, Ferenczi's works were vilified and like Adler, Jung, and Rank before him, he became marginalized in the psychoanalytic canon of literature. But, re-examining his works today reveals a wealth of clinical and theoretical research and theorizing especially in the treatment of regressed and severely traumatized patients that can be quite useful to the practicing clinician.

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Book Reviews:

Iscan, C. (2021). **Book Review: *Large-Group Psychology: Racism, Societal Divisions, Narcissistic Leaders, and Who We Are Now***, by Vamik D. Volkan, Phoenix Publishing House Ltd, Oxfordshire, UK, 2020, 139 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 244–248.

Vamik Volkan's contributions to psychoanalytic literature are numerous. His earlier publications are mainly clinical and a reflection of his extensive work and experience with severely disturbed patients, patients with psychosis, and severe personality disorders. . . . Vamik Volkan has the magic of talking about the most complex phenomena plainly. His work in this realm is to inspire not only psychoanalysts, psychiatrists but generations of mental health workers.

Turning our focus to his new book, we are in the territory of his "second career" namely the study of Large-Group Psychology. The psychoanalytic study of the human experience within the context of the group is not entirely a new ground. Wilfred Bion's important contributions in this area allowed for deep insights about group dynamics by introducing an approach to the group as a unit as well as each individual's experience within the group (Bion, 2000). Tavistock Model offers ideas about how a group operates as one unit, akin to a biological organism. Moreover, this model based on Bion's ideas delineates differences between large groups and small groups. Volkan's approach breaks a new ground by carrying our understanding of the group dynamics to a much larger

context and offers a novel application of psychoanalytic theory to study politics, international, ethnic, racial conflicts and beyond.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09293-z>

Covitz, H. (2021). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysts, Psychologists and Psychiatrists Discuss Psychopathy and Human Evil***, edited by Sheldon Itzkowitz and Elizabeth F. Howell, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2020, 295 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 249–253.

Sigmund Freud, in his writings, was neither utopian nor dystopian but boldly pragmatic in his embracing of humankind's ever-present task of weaving together their instinctual animal heritage with their participation in a variety of communities and societies. Thinking of children, he (Freud, [1917](#), p. 311) noted:

For society must undertake as one of its most important educative tasks to tame and restrict the sexual instinct when it breaks out ... and to subject it to an individual will which is identical with the bidding of society. It is also concerned to postpone the full development of the instinct till the child shall have reached a certain degree of intellectual maturity, for, with the complete irruption of the sexual instinct, educability is for practical purposes at an end. Otherwise, the instinct would break down every dam and wash away the laboriously erected work of civilization.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09297-9>

Vida, J. E. (2021). **Book Review: *The Mind in Disorder: Psychoanalytic Models of Pathology***, by John E. Gedo, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 251 pp. First published in 1988 AND ***The Languages of Psychoanalysis***, by John E. Gedo, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 209 pp. First published in 1996. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 254–262.

Our meaning is in how we live in an imperfect world, in our time. We have no other.

Tom Stoppard in *The Coast of Utopia*

It is hard to be writing.

I am having a hard time writing this review.

It is equally hard to write, instead of a review, a commentary-essay about these two books, though it would be absolutely impossible if I had to do it in any usual way. (I am too far past my “use by” date to do that.) Let me explain ... or ... you may prefer to stop reading right now.

If my increasingly porous memory serves me, it was August 2020 when I responded to a Books Available for Review email and requested to take on both of these volumes. My appreciation of John Gedo had been forged from a prickly set of misfirings almost thirty years ago (and alluded to in one of the papers here collected, “More on the affectivity of the analyst,” in *The Languages of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 102–113) that, improbably, bloomed into a comradeship of multiple affinities that would grow to include a book

review (Vida, [2001](#)), professional acquaintance, and some exchanges of personal confidences and support. We had lost touch in recent years, despite a chance encounter at a chamber music concert in Southern California where he seemed to have relocated in retirement.....

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Dimitrijevic, A. (2021). **Book Review: *As Time Goes By: An Analytic Journey***, by Judith Dupont, Translated from French by Agnes Jacob, International Psychoanalytic Books, New York, 2019, 340 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 263–267.

This book is the first comprehensive introduction into both autobiography and writings of Judith Dupont for English-speaking audiences. It was originally published in French in 2015. The book consists of a lengthy autobiographical essay (section 1) and individual papers clustered around several topics Dr. Dupont considered central in her work as a psychoanalyst (sections 2–5). They are well worth reading because many papers are here translated for the first time, and they offer a lot of new historical details and fresh thoughts.

Most of the author's papers are focused on the clinical aspect of psychoanalysis. Even though some are about racism or authoritarianism, or about arts or outcome research, they almost always include lively associations to sessions, encounters, and supervisions. Several chapters deal with the issue of trauma, again in a dialogue of conceptual and clinical research....

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Jennings, P. (2021). **Book Review: *Zen Insight, Psychoanalytic Action: Two Arrows Meeting***, by Seiso Paul Cooper, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 172 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(2), 268–271.

If you've been a practicing analyst in recent years, chances are you've had a patient seeking a therapist conversant in Buddhist teachings and meditation. Whether patients have sought you out due to familiarity with your work as a clinician friendly to the spiritual terrain, or you've grown interested in the clinical relevance of Buddhist psychology through your patients, you will find in Paul Cooper's trenchant and nuanced book *Zen Insight, Psychoanalytic Action*, a wellspring of analytic and spiritual insight.

Having read much of the literature on the ever-growing conversation between Buddhist psychology and psychodynamic treatment, I came to Cooper's book with little anticipation of new or revelatory perspectives. But immediately Cooper offers a simultaneously unique and inclusive approach to these contrasting traditions. As a seasoned psychoanalyst with ecumenical analytic orientations and a Zen priest in the Japanese Soto tradition, Cooper writes with a palpable and humble authority.....

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