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Special Issue: Balancing the General with the Particular in Psychoanalysis

Introduction:

Miller, I. S. (Issue Editor) (2021). **Balancing the General with the Particular in Psychoanalysis**. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 1–5.

Introduction: I am aware, as I write, that I address the reader at a particular moment in time. And I have no doubt that by the time these words find themselves published, that moment may have vanished, transformed into another time with other bundles of concern and fusions of pressing magnitude. Clinically, this contextual issue is framed across today's psychoanalytic schools through the post-Lewinian lens of field theory (Stern, [2013a](#), [b](#)). Our psychoanalytic situation is not only individual and intra-psychic, but also interpersonally and relationally shaped by the social, political, and societal pressures and times under which each of us lives. How we integrate the fields in which we practice, how we construct our psychoanalytic situations, will, of course, vary subjectively both relative to the individual therapist and patient within the clinical dyad.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09280-4>

Articles:

Reiner, A. (2021). **What Language are we Speaking? Bion and Early Emotional Life**. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 6–26.

Abstract: Bion ([1970](#)) saw his concept of 'O' as the central psychoanalytic perspective. It is a waking dream state, seen also as an essentially "religious" or spiritual perspective. While religious ideas may seem far afield in a discussion of fundamental elements of psychoanalysis, the word "spiritual" here refers simply to metaphysical matters of the spirit, mind, or personality, three terms used interchangeably by Bion. This essential experience of 'O' is seen as a selfless state, which the author clearly distinguishes from *pathological* states of selflessness, mindlessness, or nothingness often seen in patients who suffered early emotional trauma. Philosophical ideas about being and non-being help to clarify the difference. The challenges in finding an effective language to communicate verbally with pre-verbal states are explored through detailed clinical examples of working with often intractable states of resistance to being.

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Barratt, B. B. (2021). **On Difference and the “Beyond Psychotherapy” of Psychoanalytic Method: The Pivotal Issue of Free-Associative Discourse as De-repressive Praxis.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 27–50.

Abstract: It is argued that, in the course of the history of psychoanalysis since 1914 or thereabouts, the clinical and theoretical interests of psychotherapy have occluded our comprehension of the radicality of the free-associative method that is special to psychoanalysis. Setting aside the entirety of the range of endeavors that we might call “psychotherapy,” this essay defines critically the practices of “psychoanalytically-informed therapies” and distinguishes them from Sigmund Freud’s “analysis” that is tied to the unique method by which he discovered the inherent repressiveness of self-consciousness. This thesis implies that the human psyche can neither be properly understood nor healed by theory-driven techniques that prioritize epistemological considerations. Rather the liberatory potential of psychoanalytic praxis must be grasped as an “onto-ethical discipline,” by which the ideological commitments of therapy might be subverted.

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Loiacono, A. M. (2021). **The Problems and Contradictions Inherent in Analytic Training and the Ultimate Requirement: Working with Uncertainty.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 51–59.

Abstract: In this essay, the author’s aim is to outline the specifics of psychoanalytic intervention and its current relevance. She explores the boundaries of the clinician’s identity, (whether psychotherapist or psychoanalyst), examines the training itself, as well as how and where one can develop the skills necessary to engage in this profession. She specifically assesses the Italian situation. For the construction of the identity of the therapist/psychoanalyst it is fundamental to learn how to tolerate uncertainty, seen here as a value, not a limitation, in contrast with the certainties which characterize other forms of psychotherapy. The complexity of psychoanalytic training is thus demonstrated as a function of two particularities, that of methodological rigor, incorporating all the necessary theoretical knowledge, and the delicate skill of being able to maneuver within the world of passion, regulated by the personal identity of the clinician.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09284-0>

Miller, I. S. (2021). **Histories, Traumas, and Emotional Foreclosure from Manhattan to Dublin and Back.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 60–81.

Abstract: The present paper begins with the particulars of clinical practice in Ireland. Through clinical example, it examines the emotion of *shame*, widely paired with *blame*, as a socially acceptable admission of psychological functioning, both in exercising and in denying the communication of more profound feeling. As a necessary emotional outlet, shame authorizes aggressions both large and small. Shame demands that certain acts,

often seemingly random and subjective, are to be judged disgraceful in others. Shame demands that someone, everyone, endures hurt, at least through social judgement. Passing through the armoring of shame as social defense, clinical examples focus on the defensive action of foreclosure as an interpersonal act of nihilation, reducing another to no-thing, while at the same time diminishing one's own sense of inadequacy. Discerning this clinical pattern, the author generalizes from practice in a particular place to similar observable patterns, both with different populations, and in different contexts.

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Mucci, C. (2021). **Dissociation vs Repression: A New Neuropsychoanalytic Model for Psychopathology.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 82–111.

In loving memory of Philip Bromberg

Abstract: Recent research on trauma, attachment and neuroscience point at a clear divide in psychopathology between disorders based on repression, (as in Freud's repression model) and psychopathologies structured on dissociative mechanisms, a response to severe interpersonal trauma. Pathologies based on repression are typical of a neurotic structure, (with better developmental outcome), while pathologies based on dissociation are of more severe, often borderline nature, as in Otto Kernberg's borderline organization (1975). Neurobiology of attachment and affect regulation theory (Allan Schore), developmental psychopathology (Giovanni Liotti) and contemporary relational psychoanalysis (Philip Bromberg), all provide clinical evidence that the most severe psychopathology is of dissociative structure. This paper clarifies the after-effects of first level of traumatization of human agency (i.e., lack of attunement) and of the second level as in cases with actual abuse, maltreatment or incest (Mucci, 2013), with the internalization of a dyad victim/persecutor within the self of the survivor, as seen in borderline psychopathology (Mucci, 2018).

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Book Reviews:

Covitz, H. H. (2021). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysis as an Ethical Process*** by Robert P. Drozek, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 295 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 112–115.

Theodore Reik (1949) opined that all love begins in envy. The lover recognizes something in the beloved that is out of the lover's reach and seeks to share vicariously in that which is envied through the loving attachment to that beloved other. He recognized that there is the ever-present danger that such beneficent envy can turn into hateful and toxic envy. A journal reviewer, one who reads someone else's labor which has occupied that Other for months or years, is in a position where either type of envy may dominate.

In rare circumstances, the book review editor has let a not-very-rich book into the cue which is worthy of only criticism; that is not a common occurrence. Most often, the reviewer meets the words of another worker in the same field who has thought deep-and-hard about their subject and has gone through the many crucibles and more sundry hurdles of the publishing process and come out the other end with something of great value. The reviewer, then, has the opportunity, so to speak, to get into a beautifully crafted boat, fashioned by the shipwright and the honor to row with that author, even if just a little bit.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-021-09273-3>

Turtz, J. (2021). **Book Review: *Core Concepts in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Clinical, Research Evidence and Conceptual Critiques*** by Morris N. Eagle, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 244 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 116–119.

To my mind, there is no one more fluent in and no one better able to clearly articulate comparative analyses of different psychoanalytic orientations than Morris Eagle. His latest book, *Core Concepts in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Clinical, Research Evidence and Conceptual Critiques*, is no exception. What makes this book different from his previous books is his focus on empirical research and what this means for psychoanalysis. This questioning stance with regard to what is therapeutic in psychoanalysis is quite refreshing. It should be noted that Eagle also published a companion piece in 2018 entitled *Core Concepts in Classical Psychoanalysis*, which is not a part of this review. Explaining the reasons for these texts, Eagle writes that his major objective “is to address one large question: Of the core concepts and formulations of psychoanalytic theory, which ones should be discarded; which ones should be modified and in what ways; and which ones should be retained, all in the light of research findings, clinical evidence and conceptual critiques?” (Introduction, para. 1).

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Whitman-Raymond, L. M. (2021). **Book Review: *Beyond the Primal Addiction: Food, Sex, Gambling, Internet, Shopping and Work*** edited by Nina Savelle-Rocklin and Salman Akhtar, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 192 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 120–122.

This is an absorbing book, a new and needed set of essays on behavioral addictions from a psychoanalytic or psychodynamic point of view. Taken on their own merits, these articles have many useful ideas to offer, both theoretically and clinically. But if you are looking for a cohesive formulation on what constitutes behavioral addictions, or on treatment of these addictions you will be mightily disappointed.

We begin with an essay by Lance Dodes in which he explains the roots of addiction as located in the sufferer’s chronic experience of rage and helplessness. This represents an

important breakthrough in psychoanalytic history, encouraging psychoanalysts to think about addiction in psychodynamic ways, rather than relegating addicts to the realm of untreatable pleasure seekers. While Dodes' (2002) premise has had positive impact on the treatment of addicts, his focus on a single cause of addictive behavior seems a bit simplistic. Particularly with the recent contributions of neuropsychology, it would be helpful to add in those genetic, physiological, and neurological contributions both to the formation of addictive behavior and to its continuation.

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Molofsky, M. (2021). **Book Review: *The Mindbrain and Dreams: An Exploration of Dreaming, Thinking, and Artistic Creation*** by Mark J. Blechner, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 343 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 123–127.

The Mindbrain and Dreams is beautifully written and brilliantly conceptualized, addressing an important and complex area of psychoanalytic thought that pulls together various threads of contemporary discourse in psychoanalysis. Dr. Blechner ably interweaves the richness of psychoanalytic theory with the latest thinking in neuropsychology, with an emphasis on that which underlies the processes and intricacies of the psyche, thought, feeling, memory, creativity, language, and dream. These processes underlie not only the psyche, but the elaborate structures of human culture. Thus, the humanities and the sciences meet in this exploration of the depth of psychoanalysis, in that which Dr. Blechner so wisely calls the “mindbrain.”

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Platt, C. M. (2021). **Book Review: *Psychodynamics of Writing*** edited by Martin Weegman, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 151 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 128–130.

Let's say you've never written anything in your life, well, possibly a journal entry or two, and you think you have an idea that you'd like to explore and maybe even publish. Where would you start? What might inhibit you from beginning your project? How might you manage the loneliness of creating something from the jumble of ideas in your mind? You have been saying you *wanted* to write for years and have resolved that it's time to do it, but that decision is followed by self-doubt, “Do you really have anything to say?” Now, imagine that you have twelve talented and insightful writers to help you confront your writing impasses, the ones that reside in our unconscious and the ones that you have known about for years.

In case you are wondering where you would find such well-tuned mentors, wait no longer. London-based Martin Weegman has assembled twelve psychologically sophisticated writers from a variety of disciplines to guide the novice writer, as well as the more seasoned writer, through the developmental stages of producing an original piece of writing.....

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In Memoriam:

The Editors. (2021). **Bernard J. Paris, August 19, 1931–November 7, 2019.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(1), 131–135.

The *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* gratefully remembers the amazing life and work of Dr. Bernard Paris, who died on November 7th, 2019 at the age of 88. He was an esteemed and beloved senior member of the Editorial Board of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* and the Karen Horney psychoanalytic community. Many of his *Journal* contributions can be accessed on the PEP Website (www.pep-web.org) and a more extensive list of his work is included at the end of this article.

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