

## September 2020, Vol. 80, Issue 3

### Articles:

Akhtar, S. (2020). **Repression: A Critical Assessment and Update of Freud's 1915 Paper.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 241–258.

Abstract: The concept of repression has been relegated to the periphery in current psychoanalytic theorizing. This is in part due to a reflexive and ill-informed avoidance of Freudian metapsychology, and in part due to preoccupation with 'primitive' and 'deeper' states of mind, a perspective that presumes that repression operates exclusively in 'higher level' or 'neurotic' forms of psychopathology. A careful scrutiny of psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice does not uphold such compartmentalization. Repression is ubiquitous in mental life. It contributes to normality (e.g., onset of latency), undergirds the 'psychopathology of everyday life' (e.g., parapraxes), exists alongside splitting in severe character disorders (e.g., borderline patients "forgetting" their appointments) and, by permitting a modified return of exiled mental contents, gives birth to neurotic symptoms as well as creative imagination. Taking Freud's seminal discourse on repression (in: *Repression*. Standard Edition, vol 14. Hogarth, London, pp 141–158 1915a) as its starting point, this paper elucidates the complex, nuanced, and pervasive nature of this defense. It deconstructs Freud's unitary concept of repression into four implicit binaries and updates his proposals in the light of contemporary psychoanalytic theory. The paper offers clear guidelines for clinical applications of these ideas.

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Miller, I. S. (2020). **Spinoza's Announcement of Psychological Practice.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 259–280.

Abstract: Following Freud's admission of his own 'dependence on Spinoza's doctrine', the present paper extends psychoanalytic discernment of a bright line from Baruch Spinoza's natural philosophy across the evolution of natural and social sciences to Freud's development of psychoanalysis and forward, to contemporary psychoanalytic thinking. The lens through which these developments unfold is a close reading of Spinoza's first, incomplete methodological statement, the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*. Tracking both the developing form and textual literary context from which this Spinozan inquiry proceeds, we recognize specific anticipations of contemporary psychoanalytic phenomena.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-020-09257-9>

Balbuena, F. (2020). **Sabina Spielrein: From Being a Psychiatric Patient to Becoming an Analyst Herself.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 281–308.

Abstract: In this paper, I evaluate Sabina Spielrein's life and ideas from a contemporary understanding. I do this by considering the context and situation in which she lived: a journey from being a hospitalized psychiatric patient to becoming a psychoanalyst herself. From her crucial life experiences she learned that the main psychic conflicts stem from the struggle between life and death, and not from opposing ego drives and sexual desires. Spielrein's considerable creative potentials were nurtured, as well as blocked by her inner conflicts, but also by the enormous historical conflicts of her time.

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Oliveira, R. A. (2020). **The Father and the Paternal Function in the Psychoanalytical Process: Theoretical and Clinical Issues.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 309–330.

Abstract: The author addresses the essential aspects regarding the definition of the paternal function in metapsychological terms: how it forms and develops in the mental world, which functions it serves, or could come to serve, in the dynamic of mental functioning, and lastly, the consequent clinical implications, in particular the formation and development of symbolic capacity. In the second part, using two clinical vignettes and a clinical case, the author attempts to discuss its link to the theme of masculinity, suggesting a brief reflection on the challenges presented to the specificities of the analytical clinic.

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Hoffer, A. (2020). **Psychoanalysis as a Two-Person Meditation: Free Association, Meditation and Bion.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 331–341.

Abstract: This paper is based on the commonality between free association and the practice of Buddhist meditation in light of the surprising fact that both great traditions devoted to healing human suffering rely on the same fundamental method. After reviewing some aspects of free association and evenly-suspended attention, relevant aspects of Buddhist meditation and Buddhism as a psychology, including thinking and emotion, are compared and contrasted with psychoanalysis. The Buddhist insight of impermanence is highlighted. Freud's telephone metaphor becomes the basis for a discussion of psychoanalysis as a two-person meditation. Bion's proposal for the analyst to eschew memory and desire to be in the moment with his patients serves as an introduction to a case by Thomas Ogden which illustrates both Bion's points and provides an example of a two-person meditation.

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Melmed, M. L. (2020). **Bound by Infinities: Technology, Immediacy and Our Environmental Crisis.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 342–353.

Abstract: This paper explores the relationship between human desire, technology, and imagination, emphasizing (1) the phenomenology of this relationship, and (2) its ontological and ecological ramifications. Drawing on the work of Bion and Winnicott, the paper will develop a psychoanalytic container for attitudes contributing to our current climate-based crisis, paying special attention to the problematic effect technology has had on our sense of time and place. Many of our technologies stunt sensuous engagement, collapse psychic space, diminish our capacity to tolerate frustration, and blind us to our dependence on worlds beyond the human. In short, our technologies trouble our relationship to our bodies and other bodies. The paper argues that omnipotent fantasies organizing our relationship to technology, to each other, and to the nonhuman world, have cocooned us in a kind of virtual reality that devastates a sense of deep obligation to the environment.

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### **Book Reviews:**

DeYoung, P. (2020). **Book Review: *Uncovering the Resilient Core: A Workbook on the Treatment of Narcissistic Defenses, Shame, and Emerging Authenticity***, by Patricia Gianotti and Jack Danielian, Routledge, New York and Abingdon, 2017, 203 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 354–357.

This workbook was written to complement *Listening with Purpose: Entry Points into Shame and Narcissistic Vulnerability* (Danielian and Gianotti, 2012). The earlier volume, a dense theoretical text, explored the intricate, deeply split and self-deceptive ways in which relationally injured people create personal worlds of ostensible safety that become isolated bastions of misery. We know such patients as “narcissistic.” Their self-systems resist change by repeating patterns that keep their misery dissociated and projected outward. In *Listening with Purpose*, Danielian and Gianotti also made a comprehensive case for an empathic mode of listening that slowly helps these patients make contact with the vulnerable self-experience that shames and terrifies them. Such listening allows authenticity – the experience of a genuine, worthy core self – to replace hidden misery bit by bit.

The workbook begins with that optimistic vision, advertised boldly in its title: a resilient core will be uncovered; authenticity will emerge. The rigidities of “narcissism” (as defined by relational psychoanalysis, not by DSM symptomology) can, indeed, be treated successfully in psychotherapy; the workbook carries this optimism forward with the promise to show us how it can be done. In straightforward persuasive language, Gianotti and Danielian repeat major ideas from their previous work, offering video vignettes and questions for discussion that help elaborate principles of practice around each idea.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-020-09253-z>

Rachmani, V. (2020). **Book Review: *De-Idealizing Relational Theory: A Critique From Within*** edited by Lewis Aron, Sue Grand and Joyce Slochower, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 239 pp. AND ***The Unobtrusive Relational Analyst: Explorations in Psychoanalytic Companionship*** by Robert Grossmark, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 207 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 358–36.

Joyce Slochower, an editor of the thought-provoking compilation, *De-Idealizing Relational Theory*, introduces her lead chapter, “Going too far: Relational Heroines and Relational Excess” (pp. 8–34), with this statement from her previous writing: “Every psychoanalytic theory is organized around an implicit clinical ideal—a vision of the kind of analyst we want to be and the kind of change we hope psychoanalysis will effect (p. 8). This volume encompasses that ideal. Every author included here has a significant psychodynamic past from which he or she set out, a theoretical and clinical present with which they work—and another to which they aspire. Branding themselves relational or not, this book enables the reader to safely determine where within the Relational turn in psychoanalysis that they themselves fit and stimulates any personal biases or criticisms of it. These range from those principles discovered in their formative education that they cannot relinquish, to the theory that they now generally uphold, what they want not to forget, what they wish to alter or even discard, and moreover, what feels missing or insufficient.

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Blackman, J. S. (2020). **Book Review: *Silent Virtues: Patience, Curiosity, Privacy, Intimacy, Humility, and Dignity***, by Salman Akhtar, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 192 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 362–370.

The “silent analyst” has been an object of caricature and derision for many decades. About 30 years ago, Sandor Abend gave a lecture to the Virginia Psychoanalytic Society about very lengthy psychoanalytic treatments. In describing a patient he had inherited from Jacob Arlow, he mentioned that the patient complained, “You talk even less than Dr. Arlow did!” Dr. Abend astutely explained how he handled the many transference elements in such complaints.

From a different viewpoint, as early as 1937 Sandor Lorand (1937) warned psychoanalysts that very depressed patients needed interaction, and that silence would cause more difficulty in the treatment. With the advent of transference-focused therapy, mentalization-based therapies, intersubjective and self-psychological techniques, stereotyped silence has all but disappeared as a prescribed attitude for the analyst....

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Bacciagaluppi, M. (2020). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysis Listening to Love: Passion and Bonds***, by Simonetta Diena, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 206 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 371–374.

Simonetta Diena lives and works in Milan, Italy, as I do. As Francesco Barale says in the Preface (p. xv), Diena's clinical practice "is starred with a rich repertory of literary, poetic, artistic, and musical references" to the theme of love. On the front cover, this theme is synthesized by a picture by Chagall of a couple of lovers floating through the air. Barale then reveals his orthodox Freudian orientation when he speaks of "the combination between libidinal and aggressive components" (p. xvi).

In the Introduction (p. xl–xlii), Diena lists the twelve chapters of the book. The first concerns the theoretical psychoanalytical contributions to the subject of love. The second discusses the earliest mother-child relationship. The third deals with adult love. The theme of the fourth is abandonment. The fifth explores the question of "fatal love," to which death is the final solution. The sixth is on transference love. The seventh concerns the early loss of the first love object. The title of the eighth is "Love in old age." Chapter Nine concerns adultery. The tenth chapter concerns "The incapacity to love." Chapter Eleven is on homosexuality. Finally, in the last chapter Diena discusses the theme of love in several films. In each chapter there are one or two case histories.

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Turtz, J. (2020). **Book Review: *Nonlinear Psychoanalysis: Notes from Forty Years of Chaos and Complexity Theory***, by Robert M. Galatzer-Levy, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2017, 273 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 375–378.

We are currently participating in a radical shift from a linear mechanistic worldview that is reductionist in its understanding of the world to a nonlinear dynamic worldview that takes interaction and holism as its foundations. Working at what is referred to as the edge of chaos is a challenging, but exciting possibility, where small inputs lead to large changes and where strange attractors and fractals emerge in novel, creative, sudden and surprising manners. Given the advances in chaos and complexity theory over the past half-century, it seems to me vital that psychoanalysts become more familiar and well versed with nonlinear dynamic systems theory in order to further our understanding of the mysteries of the psychoanalytic process. And Galatzer-Levy's book, *Nonlinear Psychoanalysis: Notes from Forty Years of Chaos and Complexity Theory*, should, in my estimation, become a classic in this new tradition.

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Molofsky, M. (2020). **Book Review: *The Challenge of Being Human***, by Michael Eigen, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 146 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), pp. 379–381.

With his 26th book, Michael Eigen once again has taken the challenge of being human to heart, and has expanded many of his ideas from his early books in a wonderfully poetic, encapsulated way. His own humanity is revealed in his marvelously transparent description of his psychoanalytic encounters with the people who have sought him out, encounters that are profound, poignant, illuminating – and inspiring. In reading chapter after chapter, I knew that I was learning more and more about becoming more and more the psychoanalyst I want to be, and will become. Eigen leads us through the realms of unconscious process, and intense encounters with the deepest, and, often, darkest realms. Eigen's Preface immediately plunges the reader into the theme of the book. The opening two sentences spell out what we need to encounter, "The challenge of being human faces us throughout our lives, a never-ending challenge individually and communally. What to do with the many tendencies that create and live us and we live, capacities that lift us to unimaginable places and cast us down to nameless horrors?" (p. ix).

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