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Special Issue: New Perspectives on Psychoanalytic Processes

Introduction

Yerushalmi, H. (Issue Editor) (2021). **Introduction: New Perspectives on Psychoanalytic Clinical Processes.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 273–280.

Revisiting Analytic Concepts Amid a Global Crisis

From time to time, analytic therapists tend to re-examine their fundamental personal and theoretical perceptions, beliefs, and experiential knowledge of analytic processes. Currently, however, this mental action seems especially urgent amidst the massive volatile social, cultural, and political repercussions of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our personal and public realities and our ways of living in them have dramatically changed—indefinitely. Moreover, some of the current challenges might change our lives beyond this global crisis and, therefore, analytic therapists need to revisit our conceptualization. To this end, this special issue of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* on current clinical issues in psychoanalysis offers new perspectives on human development, psychopathology, intrapsychic and intersubjective processes, and transference–countertransference relations.....

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Articles:

Kernberg, O. F. (2021). **Challenges for the Future of Psychoanalysis.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 281–300.

This paper summarizes the current crisis of psychoanalysis in its relations to the scientific and cultural environment. It proposes tasks to assure the survival and contributions of psychoanalysis as science, profession, and humanistic discipline. It proposes emphasis on empirical research in the boundaries with the neurosciences and social psychology, and the development of an infrastructure for research linked to its educational program. It proposes renovation in training, abolishment of the training analysis system, and systematic teaching and research on the psychoanalytic psychotherapies focused on specific pathologies. This overall proposal stresses the need to collaborate and potentially integrate psychoanalytic institutions within university settings, and the development of active interdisciplinary engagements with other sciences and the community at large. Finally, it stresses the role of contemporary object relations theory to reunify the presently diverging schools of psychoanalytic theory and technique.

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Ahumada, J. L. (2021). **Unbridled! Thoughts on Times of Self-Begetting and Violence.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 301–325.

Mind is multi-levelled displaying an eons-long prehistory, while as Freud well knew civilization is new and frail: in biological evolution Thanatos long antecedes Eros. Complex intraspecies interchanges in higher animals proceeding by analogic communication give a firm place to Freudian *Dingvorstellungen*. Self-recognition and reflective thought come exceedingly late, in apes, requiring affectionate baby-mother mirroring. Deriving from inquiry on ego-dystonic neuroses, psychoanalysis must in the Age of Media deal with ego-syntonic pathologies sporting a demise of self-observation and self-reflection: borderline, autistic and autistoid disturbances. The ‘epidemy of autism’ offers fertile ground for very early psychoanalytic intervention, here briefly illustrated clinically. But on the other side, adolescent and post-adolescent disturbances cover a range going from autistoid retraction to more and more defiant if not violent antagonistic self-begettings, often propelled by overriding feelings of victimhood: filio-parental violence is the offshoot. Postmodernist ideologies accompany and fuel such trends.

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Civitarese, G. (2021). **Bion’s Graph of “In Search of Existence.”** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 326–350.

If we want to understand Bion’s psychoanalysis and analytic field theory, its most creative development, there is one point we must always bear in mind. Bion conceives individual therapy as group therapy. Consequently, he invites the analyst to put the patient’s past and related causal theories in the background. Rather she should focus on the emotional transformations that occur in the here and now. This is very different from observing the Freudian principles of oneiric and transference distortion, on the one hand, and the (re)construction of the patient’s past history, on the other. It is also different from paying attention to so-called deep unconscious fantasies or enactments. Such a crucial aspect, though, is often misunderstood. Here the concepts of the grid and of the regression or “in search of existence” graph are employed as a way of clarifying it. Trying at any given moment to grasp the direction of the vector that represents the sum of the emotional turbulences affecting the field, whether regressive or progressive (in other words, whether reflecting the growth of the mind or its destruction), implies using a radical technique to achieve receptiveness to the unconscious. The analyst treats all narratives in the session as if they were the recounting of a dream dreamt by the analytic dyad or group of two. A few clinical vignettes are presented by way of illustration.

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Ferro, A. (2021). **Negative Capabilities, Play and The Negative.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 351–360.

In this paper, the author explores and attempts to clarify the roles of negative capability, play and the negative in psychoanalysis. Using clinical material to illustrate what occurs in the consulting room with and without negative capability he discusses why, in his view, it is the indispensable medium for play. Using terminology inspired by Bion, the author explains why he regards the negative as a source of richness for analytic work. He concludes by discussing André Green's "*Work on the Negative*."

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Harris, A., Csillag, V., Cutner, N., Freeman-Carroll, N., Mayson, S. J. & Rufino, M. (2021). **Clinical Life in the Context of the Pandemic.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 361–394.

In this article, six analysts describe theory and practice in the time of COVID-19, examining the quality of après-coup in the way that the pandemic and its attendant crises trigger early memory and early experiences of helplessness. In the clinical events we see that the age of the patient, the circumstances and approach of the analyst, the novelty of the frame are all crucial determinants of clinical outcomes.

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Yerushalmi, H. (2021). **On Supervisors' Listening.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 395–413.

Therapists' struggle to construct the meaning of their patients' communications includes listening to their musical aspects such as intonations and rhythms. Similarly, supervisors listen to the musical aspects of their supervisees' therapeutic narratives to construct their unsymbolized meanings and to identify the patients' voices concealed in the supervisees' voices. To describe supervisors' listening processes, I propose the echo chamber metaphor along with the metaphors of evenly hovering attention and dreaming. The metaphoric echo chambers help supervisors in their listening processes by magnifying the sound signals in the supervisees' voices and by highlighting their richness and uniqueness. Two main devices of echo chambers—adjusting the reverberation time of sounds and using specific surfaces to reflect these sounds can be effectively compared to inner devices used by supervisors while listening to their supervisees' discourses.

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Book Reviews:

Covitz, H. H. (2021). **Book Review: *Identity, Narcissism and the Other: Object Relations and their Obstacles***, by Jean Arundale, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2018, 214 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 414–417.

While Narcissism may be said to have taken its place in our literature beginning with Freud's attempts (Freud, [1914](#)) to accommodate the not-so-obviously sexual expressions missing from his *Sexualtheorie*, an explosion of interest in pathological Narcissistic disturbances began some 50 years ago in the Roaring Seventies (aka the Sixties). I was in training in the USA during those years. We candidates would toddle off to packed conference halls to listen to *the lightning chess champions* of psychoanalytic theory work out their differing manners of thinking of and strategically treating pathological narcissistic states. Freud had considered such disturbances to be lost behind a stone wall of Narcissism and, therefore, inaccessible to his methods. Kohut and Kernberg, Masterson and Meissner, Searles, Volkan and Langs and many others would disagree on specifics of what constituted these personality disorders that didn't fit the conflict model of neuroses that separated Freud from Breuer in the 1890's. Many of *mes confrères* et *mes soeurs* found comfort, too, in discovering the origins of much of this thinking in the Middle British Object Relations School (i.e., in between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein) and the growing neo-Kleinian School with Rosenfeld and Segal, Winnicott and the Symingtons and Spillius and Britton and others providing similar syntheses of the *old and the new* in the UK psychoanalytic community.

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Castelloe, M. S. (2021). **Book Review: *The Handbook of Psychoanalytic Holocaust Studies: International Perspectives***, edited by Ira Brenner, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2020, 238 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 418–421.

Speechlessness in the face of catastrophe is an early theme of this anthology, a paradoxical tension reflected in its title. “Handbook” rests uneasily next to “Holocaust,” an experience that can hardly if ever be fully grasped. This extraordinary collection, edited by Ira Brenner, educates readers about the Shoah and its legacy through first-hand accounts of survivors, their children and grandchildren. Structurally the project is divided into six sections: *History*, *On surviving*, *Transmission of trauma*, *From the dark side*, *Creativity*, and finally, the resounding *Never again?* ironically reframed as a query.

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Dimitrijevic, A. (2021). **Book Review: *Self-examination in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy: Countertransference and Subjectivity in Clinical Practice***, by William F. Cornell, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 166 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 422–425.

I have to confess that at the time I volunteered to review this book I was not familiar with the author's name, and I did not really know what to expect. This only testifies to my ignorance, as Dr. William Cornell is a distinguished and seasoned psychoanalyst, psychotherapist and supervisor, who has published numerous papers and several books. In the 40 years of experience as both a clinician and an author, Dr. Cornell has built a crossover between psychoanalysis and other psychotherapy traditions, like transactional analysis and somatic therapy. Throughout this book, I appreciated the freshness of this approach of liberated, undogmatic exploration of what could be most helpful to the patient, whichever school of thought it might be coming from.

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Freeman-Carrol, N. (2021). **Book Review: *A Womb of Her Own: Women's Struggle for Sexual and Reproductive Autonomy***, edited by Ellen L.K. Toronto, JoAnn Ponder, Kristin Davisson, and Maurine Kelber Kelly, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2017, 264 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 426–427.

In the context of the #metoo movement and the sobering need for continued attention to gender inequality in today's world, it is moving how optimistic and positive this volume can be. The focus of this collection of essays is broad and includes representations of the female body and psyche, what Helena Vissing has tagged “feminist-embodiment psychoanalysis.”

The most remarkable chapters include personal insights born of deep thinking about life experiences of gender inequality. This book provides a needed contribution, from the psychoanalytic world, to the integration of contemporary psychoanalytic thinking with the literature of gender studies.

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Molofsky, M. (2021). **Book Review: *Forces of Destiny: Psychoanalysis and Human Idiom***, by Christopher Bollas, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2019, 170 pp. First published in 1989. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(3), 428–430.

Routledge shows great wisdom in reissuing *Forces of Destiny*, by Christopher Bollas, already a classic. In 1989, when it was first issued, it was his second book publication. He offers a new Preface, dated 2018, to accompany his original writings, his original insight and depth of understanding.

As I read, I was shocked by the fact that I had not read this book before, and, grateful that, 30 years after it first was published, I had an opportunity to be introduced to the book, and to the power of the ideas Bollas shares. Bollas uses his own original language, his own terminology, which, though not commonly in use over these years, have been translated into common knowledge. Certainly, the force of these ideas has had an impact on psychoanalytic thought over these many years.

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