

Abstracts for AJP website:

## March 2022, Vol. 82, Issue 1

### *Articles*

Charles, M. (2022). **The Haunting of Hill House: Psyche, Soma, and Destiny.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 1–21.

Abstract: Fairy tales and horror stories inhabit the realm of terrible truths, affording opportunities to survive and work through them from the safe distance of displacement. Psychoanalysis, too, provides spaces to enter into that enigmatic realm of imagistic, oneiric meanings and explore possibilities beyond the concrete manifestations of daily life, to penetrate the mysteries and discover the patterns. I will use various lenses of theory alongside literature and screen portrayals of a haunted house, to investigate the realm of the uncanny and explore ways in which we are haunted by truths we fail to face.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09333-2>

Eigen, M. (2022). **A Few Session Moments.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 22–31.

Abstract: This communication presents three session vignettes with three different people. The three dialogues are (1) Wondering; (2) Evacuative Moments and a Wish for Something Better, (3) Not the Lord. An emphasis is the evocative richness of moments in therapy that involve speech yet run silently through different psychic dimensions opening possibilities of growth. So much life happens in ways hard to pin down; yet trying to speak from one's being and voice one's concerns gives rise to something one might call psychic resonance.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09335-0>

Goodwin, T. W. (2022). **The Subject in Transmission: The Phantomic Origins of (Dual) Unity and The Birth of The Self.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 32–59.

Abstract: Abraham and Torok's clinical concept of the *phantom* can be rethought in extended terms to account for the challenges inherent in giving birth to oneself. The author re-examines the question of the ghost in terms of the individual's separation from the mother–child unity. This is a traumatic process that vacillates between the threat of loss and the intrusion of the mother, now constituted as an object. We manage this experience through the symbol, with the process of introjection differentiating the child and substituting the mother with psychical representatives. Incorporation is the refusal of the symbol, creating cryptic mechanisms that destroy meaning and produce resilient pathologies. Where Abraham and Torok oppose and separate these processes, the author

follows Derrida in questioning the purity of this distinction. Something cryptic necessarily intervenes in our accession to the symbol as we negotiate the enigmas and inconsistencies of the mother–child union. Our foundations are haunted by gaps that we must continually negotiate in the birth and maintenance of subjectivity. Phantoms are transmitted as we constitute an internal frame, formulate repression, and use maternal words to articulate our separation. We are subject to and subjects of transmission, incompletely individuated, as we endlessly repeat through the symbol and into the future, a dynamic of clinging to and separating from the mother.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09342-1#Sec3>

Kassouf, S. (2022). **Thinking Catastrophic Thoughts: A Traumatized Sensibility on A Hotter Planet.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 60–79.

Abstract: While catastrophizing has traditionally been pathologized within psychoanalytic traditions, in this paper I suggest that cataclysmic realities of climate change call upon all of us to cultivate catastrophic thinking. Our new climatic normal demands of us not only new concepts and language, but also a new sort of thinking, building on Wilfred Bion’s ideas that to think is to use our mind’s capacity to be in touch with internal and external realities. I suggest that sometimes people are able to learn from their experiences of trauma in ways that disrupt the culturally dominant anenvironmental orientation, that is, an orientation that brackets out the more-than-human environment. Instead, they develop a capacity to think catastrophically about and to be permeable to the more-than-human environment. What I call their “traumatized sensibility” can offer guidance as we come to co-exist with and respond more consciously to our hotter planet.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09340-3>

Melmed, M. & Santiago, C. (2022). **Blood Magic in The Age of Psychopathy, Mass Shootings and Ecological Catastrophe.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 80–111.

Abstract: This paper is an effort to locate blood magic in the age of psychopathy. Taking as a starting point Michael Eigen’s observation that psychopathic tendencies can become cut off from balancing capacities and wreak havoc, we consider the ways in which practices of blood magic, including rituals surrounding menstruation have functioned variously across cultures to balance destructive tendencies and sustain relationship with the living surround. We argue that the lack of these practices and the attitudes fed by and feeding them has contributed to an upsurge in ultra-violent phenomena like mass shootings in our culture. Moreover, we consider the ways in which such phenomena are perverted expressions of a need for blood magic that, though twisted beyond recognition, nevertheless seek expression and wishes to be recognized in this age, which has as its backdrop an unrecognized, unfolding human-wrought ecological catastrophe.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09343-0#change-history>

Aboody, A. Z. (2022). **Feminine Sexuality and The Work of The Negative.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 112–143.

Abstract: The present paper discusses the intricate development of feminine sexuality by drawing on the ideas of André Green. The paper's main argument is that feminine sexuality is unique in being dependent on the creation of a representation of an internal empty space (as an ontological entity). This takes place through "the work of the negative" and involves an instinctual movement of "double reversal," by which the drive directed at the object helps the subject establish their own body as a source of pleasure. The author will argue that the combination of these two processes, defined in this paper as "the work of the feminine," is a prerequisite of the subject's capacity to structure themselves as having a sense of internal abundance, vitality, and power that is grounded in a receptive sexual position that is relevant to both sexes. The paper will conclude by presenting clinical material demonstrating how "the work of the feminine" manifests in the way the vagina is represented in feminine sexuality. As an afterthought, the paper will describe Green's unique contribution in relation to Winnicott's contribution and to the different ways in which these two authors address the manner in which the subject comes to dwell in their body.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09341-2>

### ***On the Arts***

Kogan, I. (2022). **"Playing With Reality" In A Nazi Concentration Camp.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 144–154.

Abstract: This paper explores the function of play under traumatic circumstances, focusing on playing with the reality of a Nazi concentration camp. The goal of playing was to enhance life forces, which was achieved by active mastery of the passive trauma, re-establishment of inner equilibrium, transformation of internal reality into a more bearable one, recovery of symbolic functioning. The analysis of the movie "Life is Beautiful" is used for illustrating this theme.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09337-y>

### ***Book Reviews***

Catay, Z. (2022). **Book Review: *A Psychoanalyst on His Own Couch: A Biography of Vamik Volkan and His Psychoanalytic and Psychopolitical Concepts***, by Ferhat Atik, Phoenix Publishing House, Bicester, Oxfordshire, 2019, 163 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 155–158.

*A Psychoanalyst on His Own Couch* is a biography presenting and celebrating the life and work of Vamık Volkan, a psychoanalyst who has made seminal contributions in applying psychoanalytic thinking to resolving socio-political conflict. Born on the Mediterranean Island of Cyprus, which remains divided into Greek and Turkish sectors, Volkan knows first-hand how socio-political conflict is experienced, maintained and transmitted across generations. This biography written by a Cypriot author and director weaves together Volkan's personal journey, losses, traumas and achievements with the evolution of his work. It allows the reader to follow the thread of how personal and familial themes found their way into new psychoanalytic conceptualizations. It also shines a light on Volkan's influential work on the ground in many conflict zones around the world. I found it significant that this book was written by an author from Cyprus, who also grew up in the midst of ethnic conflict. The book took shape in the garden of Vamık Volkan's summer residence in Northern Cyprus, during long conversations between the two men. As the author Ferhat Atık –himself not a psychoanalyst – asked Vamık Volkan questions about his life and choices and grappled with understanding his psychoanalytic work, Volkan also discovered new connections for himself. The two men agreed that this process virtually served as a couch for the analyst.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09332-3>

Covitz, H. H. (2022). **Book Review: *Anti-semitism and Psychiatry: Recognition, Prevention, and Interventions***, edited by H. Steven Moffic, J. R. Peteet, A. Hankir, and M.V. Seeman, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, Cham, Switzerland, 2020, 368 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 159–162.

As many of the World's nearly 200 nation-states, including the Western Democracies, tilt towards Nationalism and autocracies, any and all attempts to bring clarity to such matters as intergroup hatred must be appreciated. For those people whose *Weltanschauungen* include some notion of the equality of humankind and a sense, as in the founding documents of the 250-year-old U.S. experiment in egalitarian governance, that all God's children deserve Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, this creeping towards Nationalism is both threatening and frightening. At the very least, it threatens our therapeutic World View which includes notions of both the healthy individual and the health-promoting polity and simultaneously sends signals to our fear-centers that light up when we are ourselves designated "the Other."

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09334-1>

Janowitz, N. (2022). **Book Review: *Social Aspects of Sexual Boundary Trouble in Psychoanalysis: Responses to the Work of Muriel Dimen***, edited by Charles Levin, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2021, 244 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 163–166.

This important volume builds upon the late Muriel Dimen's 2011 article "Lapsus Linguae, or A Slip of the Tongue: A Sexual Violation in an Analytic Treatment and its Personal and Theoretical Aftermath" (Dimen, [2011](#)). Dimen's description of her analyst's boundary violation, and the decades-long shadow it cast, is foundational reading for the current volume even though it is not included. The specific launching point for this volume is her insistence in that article on the social context of boundary violations. They are not isolated cases of psychoanalysts behaving poorly, but instead are built into the fabric of the psychoanalysis. The volume offers a range of stark theoretical explanations for the inevitability of violations, along with specific suggestions for better practices. The articles are arranged with an introduction by Charles Levin (Chapter 1), a new Dimen article on boundary violations (Chapter 2), then a section on Social Aspects of Violations (Chapters 3–6), a section Locating the Psycho-sexual Boundary (Chapters 7–10) and finally an interview with Dimen (Chapter 11). This review focuses first on some of the theoretical issues raised and then turns to the practical suggestions.

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09336-z>

Turtz, J. (2022). **Book Review: *White Privilege: Psychoanalytic Perspectives***, by Neil Altman, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2021, 80 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 167–171.

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, examines the manner in which words and language are used to naturalize concepts that are in actuality culturally constructed. These concepts are socialized from an early age to the point where people take these concepts as givens, as natural laws that need not be questioned. Semioticians would be impressed by Altman's book because of the manner in which Altman deconstructs words and concepts such as "white," "black," and "white privilege." Before exploring these terms, let's begin by examining the word "race." This word itself is an excellent example of naturalizing a concept in that race in actuality refers to a cultural construct. Ta-Nehisi Coates ([2017](#)) depicts this as follows:

When we say 'race' as opposed to 'racism,' we reify the idea that race is somehow a feature of the natural world and racism the predictable result of it. Despite the body of scholarship that has accumulated to show that this formulation is backwards, that racism precedes race, Americans still haven't quite gotten the point. (p. xi)

Go to: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11231-022-09338-x>

Zickler, E. P. (2022). **Book Review: *On Freud's "The Uncanny"***, edited by Catalina Bronstein and Christian Seulin, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2020, 137 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 82(1), 172–175.

This is the tenth volume in The International Psychoanalytical Association's *Contemporary Freud: Turning Points and Critical Issues* series, that was initiated in 1991. Each volume of the series focuses on a significant paper by Freud and presents an array of responses from an international roster of psychoanalyst writers. This seems an ideal way of continuing the project of reading Freud into contemporaneity, gathering together a disparate group of theoretical approaches with a single focus, creating something that resembles the fabric, literally the texture of international psychoanalytic thought as it exists in the moment. Freud's (1919) *The 'Uncanny'* is a particularly evocative text for such a project at this moment in psychoanalytic history. It marks a theoretical watershed for Freud as his theory began to shift from the topographical to the structural. In raising up the themes of the threat of castration, the role of the double or doppelganger, including the role of the mirror-double, and the compulsion to repeat, linked with the maternal body and genitals and the threats they pose to the emerging ego, Freud moves his theory into the territory of primary narcissism, incipient notions of projective identification, as well as elaborations of the super-ego.

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