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Special Issue: Self, Psyche, and Technology. A Brave New World.

Articles

Prince, R. (2024). **Introduction: Self, Psyche, and Technology. A Brave New World.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 147–154.

This issue brings together a diverse collection of papers, ranging from an overview of artificial intelligence to emergent medical technologies to treat treatment resistant depression, to the vicissitudes of remote psychotherapy, to the endurance of Seneca's philosophy, with the aim of wondering about the general and specific effects of technology on the nature of mind and self. These papers together explore tectonic technological advances which have occurred over a very short time but also bring with them very real dangers. Collectively, these papers pose a question: How do revolutionary technological advances, in computers and communication, the internet, artificial intelligence, brain science, nanotechnology, and genetics affect the human psychology; and do they upend the background assumptions that frame how we do our work? We ask you to read them with curiosity about the implications both for psychoanalysis, how we experience the people we work with, and their contexts; and also, for how we live our lives.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09451-z>

Knafo, D. (2024). **Artificial Intelligence on The Couch. Staying Human Post-AI.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 155–180.

Abstract: This paper examines the human relationship to technology, and AI in particular, including the proposition that algorithms are the new unconscious. Key is the question of how much human ability will be duplicated and transcended by general machine intelligence. More and more people are seeking connection via social media and interaction with artificial beings. The paper examines what it means to be human and which of these traits are already or will be replicated by AI. Therapy bots already exist. It is easier to envision AI therapy guided by CBT manuals than psychoanalytic techniques. Yet, a demonstration of how AI can already perform dream analysis reaching beyond a dream's manifest content is presented. The reader is left to consider whether these findings demand a new role for psychoanalysis in supporting, sustaining, and reframing our humanity as we create technology that transcends our abilities.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09449-7>

Leskauskas, D. (2024). (Why) Did it Turn Wrong? Wholeness or Totality of the Internet. *Am J Psychoanal* **84**, 181–189

The Internet was created as a space and a structure to share knowledge, information, and opinions for the sake of science and progression of humanity. Today, the Internet is co-created and modified by its users networking from all over the world. It is a representation of humankind, a social structure reactive to local and global societal processes. For the youngest generations the Internet is an integral part of their social milieu influencing both normal and pathological development from their very first year of life. Discussing the roots of totalitarianism, Erik H. Erikson distinguished between wholeness and totality in personal and social development and provided a wonderful metaphor of productive and pathogenic functioning for the impact of the Internet. Conceived as a fruitful association and organization for the development of wholeness in individuals and a future humanity, it largely keeps this promise. But under unfavorable social conditions and/or pathogenic individual predispositions, it can take a totalitarian structure and mode of action.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09448-8>

Gonzalez-Torres, M. A. (2024). **Technology at the Rescue? Online Games, Adolescent Mental Health and the COVID Pandemic.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(1), 190–202.

Abstract: The COVID pandemic has had a major impact on the mental health of the population, especially on female adolescents. Eating disorders and gender identity problems have increased markedly. Online activities have also grown enormously during this period occupying a large portion of adolescents' time. We explore the use of social networking and online gaming by adolescent girls and boys. We discuss their possible influence on different levels of psychological distress in boys and girls in the face of the pandemic. We propose that online games, mainly used by young boys, might offer them some emotional protection through mechanisms related to the body and its experience, to the group dynamics of competition, collaboration, and hierarchy, to the possibility of expressing aggression, and to the construction of a clearer and more stable identity. An unprejudiced look at new technologies is mandatory, if we are to avoid projecting our fears and expectations onto them.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09445-x>

Trub, L. R. (2024). **The Elephant in the Zoom: Will Psychoanalysis Survive the Screen?** *American Journal Psychoanalysis*, 84(1), 203–228.

Abstract: While screen-mediated analysis long predated the pandemic, it was largely seen as non-equivalent to in-person treatment by analysts and patients alike. When COVID forced us to move our entire practices to the screen, our concerns about its limitations were replaced by relief; we could continue doing analytic work during a terrifying and challenging time. Three years later, many have chosen to continue practicing remotely for reasons that are no longer driven by fears of exposure. We mostly minimize or deny our earlier concerns about the limitations of screen work. Have we chosen convenience, ease, and a personal sense of safety over togetherness, while ignoring the underbelly of remote work? This paper identifies the convergence of several forces underlying our decision to stay remote, including guilt and anxiety about privileging our own self-interest, unmourned losses and collective PTSD, fear of the future and existential anxiety about living in a techno-culture that threatens to replace us. Our denial of these powerful forces makes it easy to rationalize a decision to embrace remote work and disavow the threat it poses to our field.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09457-7>

Gotti, M. (2024). **From the Gate to the Gateway: Psychoanalytic Navigations Online.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 229–249.

Abstract: The shift towards remote or online therapy was compelled by the Pandemic. Many colleagues, who neither had practice using this modality, nor had ever considered it as a possibility, ultimately adopted it. This experience brought with it a substantial expansion of online therapy beyond that moment of emergency. It opened up new prospects of intervention, but at the same time it required a greater measure of reflection in order to understand how to inhabit this new therapy space. Setting aside provisory, intermittent, or emergency situations, which temporarily transfer therapy into a “field of tents” (Bolognini, 2021), the author proposes to consider how online psychotherapy redefines an important element of the psychoanalytic setting—the issue of the space. This is no longer the therapist’s place of work, envisaged and organized by him/her/them, fixed in time, and contrived only to welcome the therapeutic relationship—one of the crucial aspects of the external setting, which together with the temporal dimension, fulfills the therapy ritual. Assuming the framework to be essential to the psychoanalytic process, this paper will focus on the methodology of online therapy. The author will describe the contributions of the neurosciences, to provide a deeper understanding of the distinctive characteristics of sharing in an online vs. an offline space. Online therapy should be assessed for its distinguishing qualities within a complete theoretical, technical, and clinical reflection specific to each case. Proceeding as if it were a mere relocation of an in-person analysis would enhance the seductiveness of a therapy that is easily

accessible with any laptop anywhere, anytime, and in which one could mistake an online connection for a deep connection.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09446-w>

Itzkowitz, S. (2024). **When Psychoanalytic Dyads Are Forced into the Virtual World.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 250–267.

Abstract: The Covid pandemic changed the daily routines for millions of people. This was the case for those who were gainfully employed, especially for those who work as psychoanalysts and psychodynamic psychotherapists. At least for a good while, the practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis moved from the consulting room to the virtual world of the internet. The author explores the impact virtual therapy had on three different patients. One began a three time a week analysis during the pandemic. The duo met virtually for a year and a half before their first in person meeting. The other two patients had begun twice a week analyses a few years before the pandemic, met virtually for two years, until in person sessions restarted. The patients and the author describe their experiences.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09447-9>

Rodado, J. & Crespo, F. (2024). **Relational Dimension Versus Artificial Intelligence.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 268–284.

Abstract: Thirty years ago, we proposed the similarity between the functioning of artificial intelligence and the human psyche, suggesting multiple parallels between the Freudian model proposed in the “Project for Psychology for Neurologists” and the connectionist theories applied in the generation of parallel distributed processing systems (PDP), also known as connectionist models. These models have been and continue to be the foundation of general artificial intelligences like ChatGPT, evolving and gaining prominence in everyday life. From the earliest applications in psychiatry, recreating computationally simulated modes of illnesses, to the use of deep learning models, especially in the field of computer vision for tasks such as image recognition, segmentation, and classification. Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) are employed for tasks involving sequences of data, such as natural language processing, or models based on the Transformer architecture, like BERT and GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer), which have revolutionized natural language processing. In this present work, we analyze the significance of the emergence and exponential growth of these types of tools in the field of healthcare, from medical diagnosis and patient care to psychological attention and psychotherapeutic treatment, exploring the changes and transformations in the forms of subjective expression that are

arising. We also examine and argue for the importance and validity of the relational dimension proposed by our psychoanalytic approach in contrast to the potential use of these tools as treatment models.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09458-6>

Austelle, C. W. & Seery, E. (2024). **Psychodynamically Informed Brain Stimulation: Building a Bridge from Brain to Mind.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 285–310.

Abstract: Since its inception, psychiatry has undergone several periods of radical identity transformation. Initially limited to psychotherapy alone, the advent of medications stimulated an era of biological psychiatry. For years, medications served as the mainstay of biological treatments, paralleled by a rise in treatment resistance. Brain stimulation therapies are psychiatry's newest arm of intervention and represent an area ripe for exploration. These techniques offer new hope to treatment-resistant patients, but in a manner often dissociated from psychoanalytic conceptualization and the practice of psychotherapy. There is growing interest in bridging this divide. In this article, we continue the efforts at interweaving what may seem to be disparate approaches through the topic of treatment resistance. This article aims to engage interventional psychiatrists in considering psychosocial dimensions of their treatments and to provide education for psychoanalytic clinicians on the history, mechanism of action, and applications of brain stimulation technologies.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09444-y>

Miller, I. (2024). **Back to the Future with Seneca's Practical Philosophy in Mind.** *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 311–333.

Abstract: This paper regards Seneca's practical philosophy as ancestor to psychoanalytically informed psychotherapy and as a progenitor of ongoing contemporary praxis in applied ideas of mind. Facing forward into the Anthropocene, as psychoanalysis encounters Artificial Intelligence, the convergence with contemporary psychoanalytic psychotherapy of value concepts developed from Antiquity is discussed. Drawn from Seneca's *Letters on Ethics*, constellations of significant ideas present in ancient practical philosophy resonate with similar configurations developed two millennia later, and central to the practice of contemporary psychotherapy.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09450-0>

Book Reviews

Covitz, H. (2024). **Book Review: *Vital Flows Between the Self and Non-Self: The Intersychic***, by Stefano Bolognini, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2022, 180 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84 (2), 334–338.

Every psychoanalytic book potentially brings the reader two distinct gifts. The author gives us their novel formulations and/or syntheses of others' formulations that justify the publication of the work and, secondly, the author gives a glimpse into a way of being, clinically and maybe personally. Perhaps, readers come to and leave the book with reflection, sometimes more about the first and sometimes more about the second gift.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09455-9>

Kaul, N. (2024). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysis of the Psychoanalytic Frame Revisited: A New Look at José Bleger's Classic Work***, edited by Carlos Mogueillansky and Howard B. Levine, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2023, 166 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 339–342.

Covid-19 forced a rupturing of the frame for every patient and analyst; it therefore seems especially apposite to revisit José Bleger's (1967) classic paper on the frame, when the analytic "dyad turned into mutual, dangerous persecutors" (p. 153). This thoughtful collection—a part of the IPA series of books that seek to revisit psychoanalytic classics in the face of change—was conceived of during the pandemic. Carlos Mogueillansky's "Introduction" (pp. 14–20) frames the chapters. Pertinently, he distinguishes "the setting [which] was often confused with contract" (p. 17), but it has over the nearly two centuries, acquired a spectrum of meanings. It is both "a ritual game and a playing area" (p. 18). It offers a space "for the expression and play of the signifiers" (p.18). It is both "an agreement of rules" and also "an empty space—a blank—which is used as a pause, as a punctuation of discourse" (pp. 18, 19).

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09453-x>

Janowitz, N. (2024). **Book Review: *Psychoanalysis and the Mind-Body Problem***, edited by Jon Mills, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2022, 383 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 343–346.

This capacious collection of fourteen articles, plus an introduction by Jon Mills, argues that every psychoanalyst must take a position on the mind-body problem. The ancient body-soul division has been reformulated, the language of "soul" largely dropping by the wayside, according to Mills, because of its religious connotations. Diverse notions of

mind take up the slack. Every analyst assumes some sort of relationship between self-reflexive thought (mind) and bodily instincts (body). The exact details vary tremendously. Too often these foundational ideas are not made explicit, despite their importance. This volume makes them explicit from a wide range of starting points.

Go to: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11231-024-09454-w>

Sarnat, J. E. (2024). **Book Review: *Psychoanalytic Supervision***, by Nancy McWilliams, Guilford Press, New York, NY, 2021, 221 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 347–350.

In reading *Psychoanalytic Supervision*, I felt myself in dialogue with a master clinician sharing the accumulated wisdom of years of supervisory practice. Nancy McWilliams has a gift for writing accessibly about complex subjects and as a result her previous books about psychoanalytic diagnosis, theory, and technique have been well-received and widely read. I have no doubt the same will prove true for this book.

The author covers a broad range of topics, and the detailed table of contents makes the book easy to return to for reference. McWilliams introduces her subject by providing an overview of models of supervision and their historical evolution. The rest of the book is both a systematic and engaging account of her own approach to supervising.

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Bozorgnia, B. (2024). **Book Review: *Persian Blues, Psychoanalysis and Mourning***, by Gohar Homayounpour, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2022, 146 pp. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 351–355.

Historically, the Western media has portrayed Iran after the 1979 revolution with images of women clad in black hijab, bearded men wielding kalashnikovs, and turbaned mullahs, shouting in unison with raised fists and steely eyes. With the recent uprising after the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022, the West was flooded with a wholly different set of images about Iran: people marching down the street shouting “death to the dictator,” women (many adolescents) letting their hair go uncovered despite the threat of batons and tear gas, and couples kissing under the glow of flaming government buildings as an act of resistance. In this context, Tehran based psychoanalyst Gohar Homayounpour’s *Persian Blues* takes on special significance.

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