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Book Review Essay: “Intimacy and Separateness in Psychoanalysis” by Warren Poland

Intimacy and Separateness in Psychoanalysis

by Warren S Poland

With a preface by Nancy Chodorow. Edited and introduced by William F. Cornell

Routledge 2018

Critics all agree in considering Warren Poland the best writer among contemporary American psychoanalysts. He received the Sigmund Award in 2009 for his book *Meeting the Darkness. The Dyad and Principles of Clinical Technique*.

Like a great author, Poland constantly gives us evidence of his love of language. His thought is completely imbued in readings not only of the best English-speaking authors of literature and poetry, but also of Latin and French literature. This saves him from the often too jargon-filled style of many psychoanalytical works.

Intimacy and Separateness in Psychoanalysis therefore offers a remarkably pleasant read. In this work, Poland explores with extreme refinement all the most subtle paradoxes of *being with* and *being separated*, everything that pertains to intimacy in our way of being with the other, along with everything that concerns the otherness of our relationship with ourselves. Readers are plunged into the heart of the analytical relation and the readers/analysts always find themselves in the best time of what they themselves feel in the experience of analytical practice.

Thus given the interaction between intimacy, proximity and attention for the other and detachment, autonomy and solitude, we find ourselves reading some of the finest pages ever written on the ephemeral, the incomplete and on the detachment, at the end of the path, from what detains us most tightly in life.

This book has no equivalents in psychoanalytic literature because it manages to make us feel the singularity of the other and of ourselves in both solitude and sharing, in a writing of which we recognize the singularity in itself while partaking in it.

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