

Retrieved from:

The European Journal of Psychoanalysis

Jun 24, 2024

<https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/articles/editors-note-2/>

Alfredo Lombardozi

Editor's Note

This special issue of JEP, edited by Anthony Molino and myself, is dedicated to current relationships between psychoanalysis and culture, understood in its broadest possible sense. We have collected important contributions by authors who, from different perspectives, have taken on the suggestive but not easy task of articulating relations of a new kind between anthropological research and psychoanalytic theory and practice. Other essays address the relationship between psychoanalysis and culture, again from the kind of broad perspective that makes room for the study of those human forms of expressions we call cinema, religion, and social behavior.

To promote connections between different forms of knowledge and different relational contexts gives rise, of course, to anxieties but also to new possibilities for broadening our knowledge of psychic and cultural otherness. As can be seen from the papers here collected, these 'contaminations' make it possible to evidence, elaborate and deploy newly emerging forms of cultural distress by using both psychoanalytical and socio-anthropological experience and categories.

Forms of dialogue may differ, and one that is felt to be very contemporary today, in an age that some define as 'post-human', is indeed that of contamination. The contamination of literary genres and anthropological contexts of which Anthony Molino writes; the constructions of identity on the part of children of immigrants explored by Virginia De Micco; Waud Kracke's account of the experience of cultural displacement of an indigenous Amazonian in his shocking encounter with Western "civilization", all take part of a more distinctly anthropological excursus in which we look to privilege new forms of dialogue with the Other. Central to all these efforts is a concern with present-day cultural transformations and the complexities of fluid and complex forms of identity. In other words, the three authors cited all seem concerned with locating strategies that might help establish a vital and dynamic relation between the inner world of subjects, their psychic reality, and the cultural and environmental contexts in which they live, love and work.

Both Ben Kilborne's paper and Molino's interview with Vincent Crapanzano invite theoretical reflections concerning the nature of the encounter between psychoanalysis and social-cultural anthropology. Much-needed epistemological parameters are outlined, in a far-reaching and exhaustive historical foray into the relations between the two disciplines. Alongside these two contributions, Gananath Obeyesekere's probing study of anorexia—from the perspective of psychoanalytical anthropology—is at one and the same time also a fascinating analysis of the theme from an historical and cultural perspective: venturing, as Obeyesekere does, into compelling comparisons between Western medieval religious mysticism and prevalent forms of Oriental mysticism.

The essays by Haim Bresheeth, a filmmaker and media scholar, and René Major, a psychoanalyst whose interests branch out into what might be called a "philosophical anthropology", converge and round out this heterogeneous collection in a unique way that is, however, firmly rooted in the tradition of any applied psychoanalysis. Where the first casts a psychoanalytic eye on the mythological imaginary of science fiction film, the other explores the phenomenon of cruelty and other contemporary manifestations of violence. In so doing, both resort to classical modes of psychoanalytic interpretation, and do so not without stirring a significant, and always welcome, degree of controversy.

In sum, the essays we've collected and propose all point to possible intersections between anthropology, psychoanalysis and cultural studies. They attest to the fact that it remains as important as ever for

psychoanalysis to challenge, confront and be engaged by bordering disciplines likewise concerned with cultural analysis: that is to say, with everything that involves symbolic processes, the production of meaning, and the function of the imaginary in society—crucial aspects all in the construction of individual, social and cultural relations. And it is truly crucial for psychoanalysis to do so, in its plural and multiple contemporary expressions, if it wants to be able to rethink and renew its place in today's world, among a plethora of vital and competing anthropologies.

Translated from the Italian by *Gianmaria Senia* and *Anthony Molino*