

Psychodynamic Therapy for Challenging Problems



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Disclosure Statement

The speaker has nothing to declare and no conflicts of interest. (All royalties from the *Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM-2)* go to a fund to support clinical research.)

Questions addressed this morning:

- ▶ 1. What are the most distinctive features of the psychodynamic tradition?
- ▶ 2. What kinds of clients are most challenging, and how might psychoanalytic psychology help clinicians of all orientations to work more easily and helpfully with people in these groups?

What is distinctive about psychoanalytic psychology?

- ▶ 1. Emphasis on the dynamic unconscious

Personality as organized by thematic conflicts rather than traits

McWilliams, N. (2012). Beyond traits: Personality as intersubjective themes. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. 94, 563-570.

Concepts relevant to internalized themes and tensions

- ▶ Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1952). *An object-relations theory of the personality*. New York: Basic Books. “internalized object relations”
- ▶ French, T. (1958). *The integration of behavior, vol. 3. The reintegrative process in a psychoanalytic treatment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. “repetitive structures”
- ▶ Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1: Attachment*. London: Hogarth. “inner working models”
- ▶ Malan, D. H. (1976). *The frontier of brief psychotherapy*. New York: Plenum. “nuclear conflicts”
- ▶ Stern, D. N. (1985). *The interpersonal world of the infant: A view from psychoanalysis and developmental psychology*. New York: Basic Books. “representations of internalizations that have been generalized (RIGs)”
- ▶ Dahl, H. (1988). Frames of mind. In H. Dahl, H. Kachele, & H. Thomae (Eds.). *Psychoanalytic process research strategies* (pp. 51-66). New York: Springer-Verlag. “fundamental and repetitive emotional structures (FRAMES)”

Continued . . .

- ▶ Aron, L. (1991). Working through the past—working toward the future. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 27, 81-108. “internal relational models”
- ▶ Tomkins, S. S. (1995). Script theory In E. V. Demos (Ed.), *Exploring affect: The selected writings of Silvan Tomkins* (pp. 312-388). New York: Cambridge University Press. “nuclear scenes”
- ▶ Bucci, W. (1997). *Psychoanalysis and cognitive science*. New York: Guilford. “emotion schemas”
- ▶ Luborsky, L., & Crits-Cristoph, P. (1996). *Understanding transference* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association: “core conflictual relationship theme”
- ▶ Lyons-Ruth, K. (1999). The two-person unconscious: Intersubjective dialogue, enactive relational representation, and the emergence of new forms of relational organization. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 19, 576-617. “implicit relational knowing”
- ▶ Horowitz, M. (1998). *Cognitive psychodynamics*. New York: Wiley. “personal schemas”

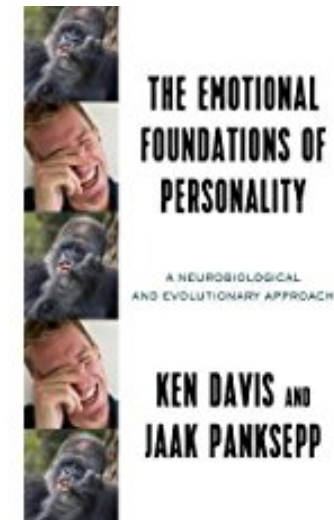
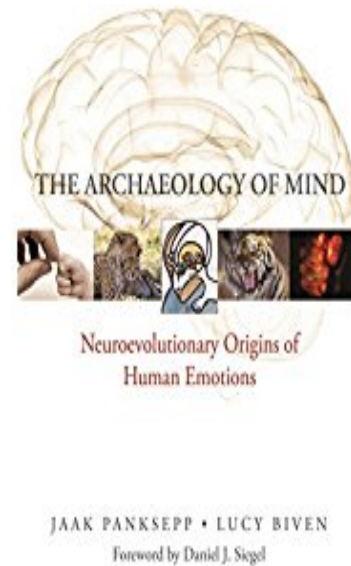
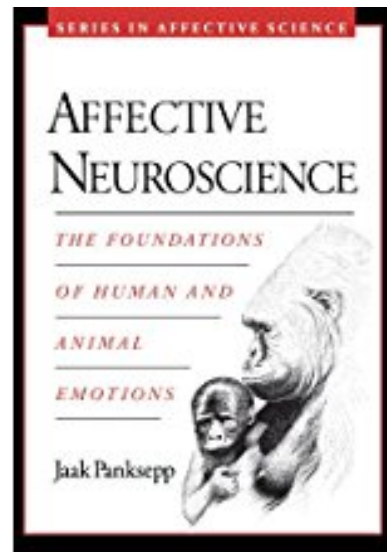
What is distinctive about psychoanalytic psychology?

- ▶ 1. Emphasis on the dynamic unconscious
- ▶ 2. Orientation to overall mental health goals

Fundamental psychological capacities

- ▶ 1. Attachment security (basic trust, ontological security, epistemic trust)
- ▶ 2. Self and object constancy (identity integration, cohesion)
- ▶ 3. Sense of agency (autonomy, self-efficacy)
- ▶ 4. Realistic and reliable self-esteem (healthy narcissism)
- ▶ 5. Reflective function and mentalization (theory of mind)
- ▶ 6. Comfort with both self-in-relation and self-definition
- ▶ 7. Sense of vitality
- ▶ 8. Acceptance of what cannot be changed

Love, work, play: Jaak Panksepp 1944-2017



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- ▶ 3. Emphasis on intersubjectivity and the therapeutic relationship

American Psychological Association, 2012

Client outcomes vary according to:

- ▶ 1. Personality factors
- ▶ 2. Relationship factors

www.apa.org/about/policy/resolution-psychotherapy.aspx

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- ▶ 4. Appreciation of unconscious resistances to change
- ▶ 5. Psychopathology as a matter of degree

Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual

second edition

PDM-2

edited by
Vittorio Lingiardi
Nancy McWilliams

Empirical support for a severity dimension

Sharp, C., Wright, A. G. C., Fowler, J. C., Frueh, B. C., Allen, J. G., Oldham, J., & Clark, L. A. (2015). The structure of personality pathology: Both general ('g') and specific ('s') factors? *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 124*(2), 387-398.

Relevant critiques of current biases in “evidence-based practice”

- ▶ Wachtel, P. (2010). Beyond “ESTs”: Problematic assumptions in the pursuit of evidence-based practice. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 27(3), 252-272
- ▶ Norcross, J. C., & Wampold, B. E. (in press). Relationships and responsiveness in the psychological treatment of trauma: The tragedy of the APA Clinical Practice Guideline. *Psychotherapy* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pst0000228>

Clinical difficulties for which psychoanalytic ideas may be helpful

- ▶ 1. Severe personality disorders (personality organized in the borderline-to-psychotic range)

Major psychoanalytic contributors on borderline psychology, with influences

- ▶ Otto Kernberg: Transference Focused Psychotherapy (Melanie Klein, object relations theory, ego psychology)
- ▶ James Masterson (Margaret Mahler's separation-individuation research)
- ▶ John Gunderson (focus on hospital management issues)
- ▶ Giovanni Liotti: Multiple integration model (attachment research and cognitive psychology)
- ▶ Fonagy and Bateman: Mentalization-Based Therapy (attachment research)
- ▶ Russell Meares: Conversational Model (self psychology, trauma and neuroscience literatures)
- ▶ Allan Abbass: Intensive Short-term Dynamic Therapy (Davanloo's work)
- ▶ Gregory and Ramen: Dynamic Deconstructive Psychotherapy

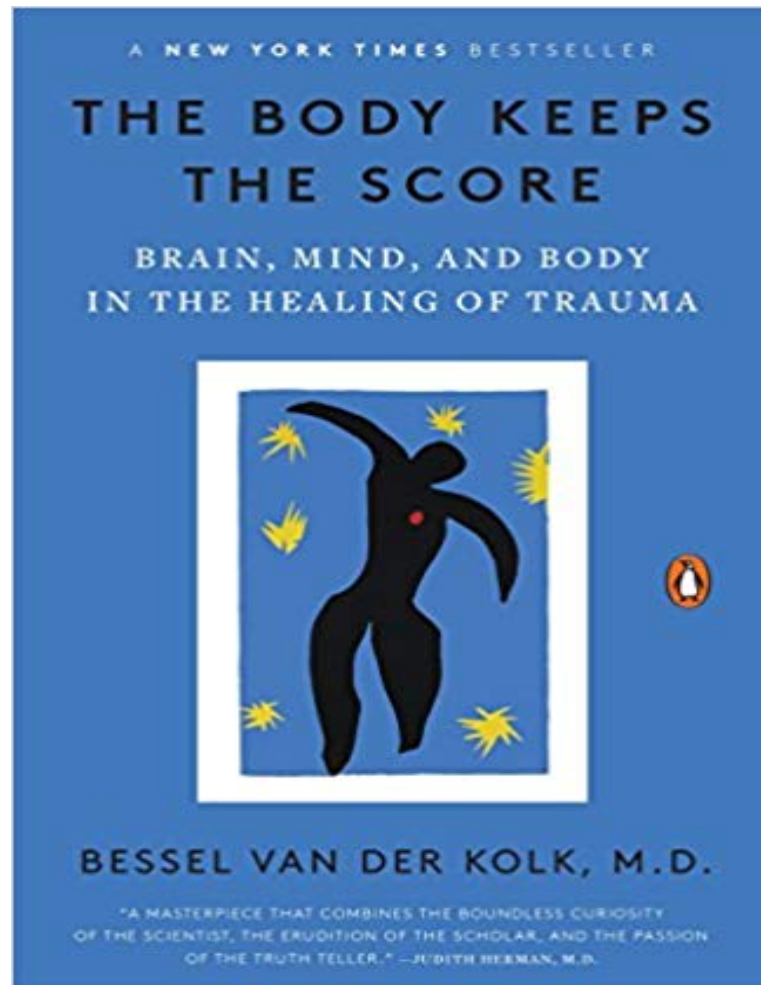
Areas of agreement about psychodynamic work with severe personality disorders

- ▶ 1. Centrality of therapeutic relationship
- ▶ 2. Importance of limits, boundaries, contracts
- ▶ 3. Discouragement of regression
- ▶ 4. Emphasis on the here-and-now
- ▶ 5. Expectation of intensity, strong countertransferences, permeability, enactment
- ▶ 6. Inevitability of either-or dilemmas
- ▶ 7. Requirement that the therapist be conversational and emotionally responsive
- ▶ 8. Necessity of supervision and consultation

Clinical difficulties for which psychoanalytic ideas may be helpful

- ▶ 1. Severe personality disorders (personality organized in the borderline-to-psychotic range)
- ▶ 2. Complex trauma

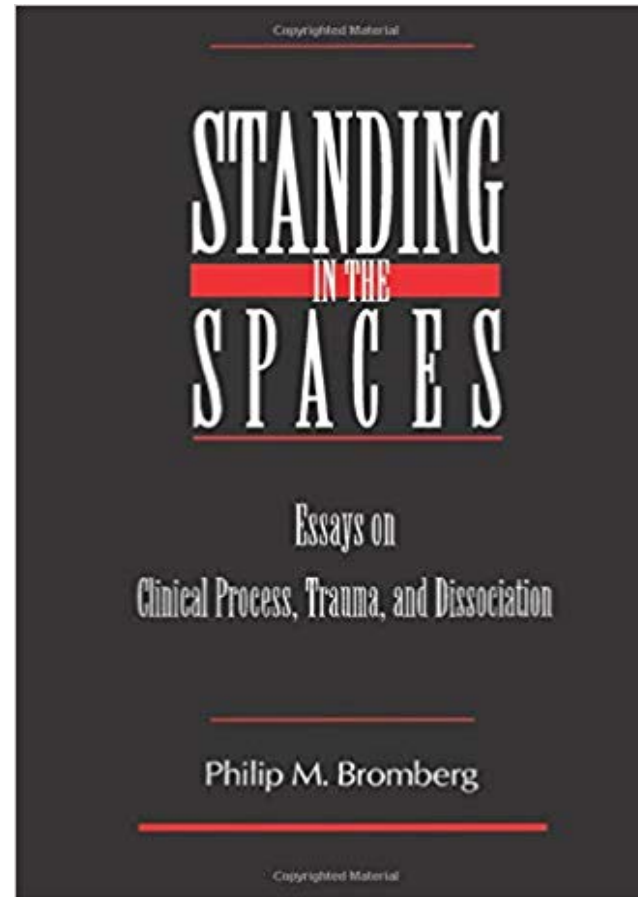
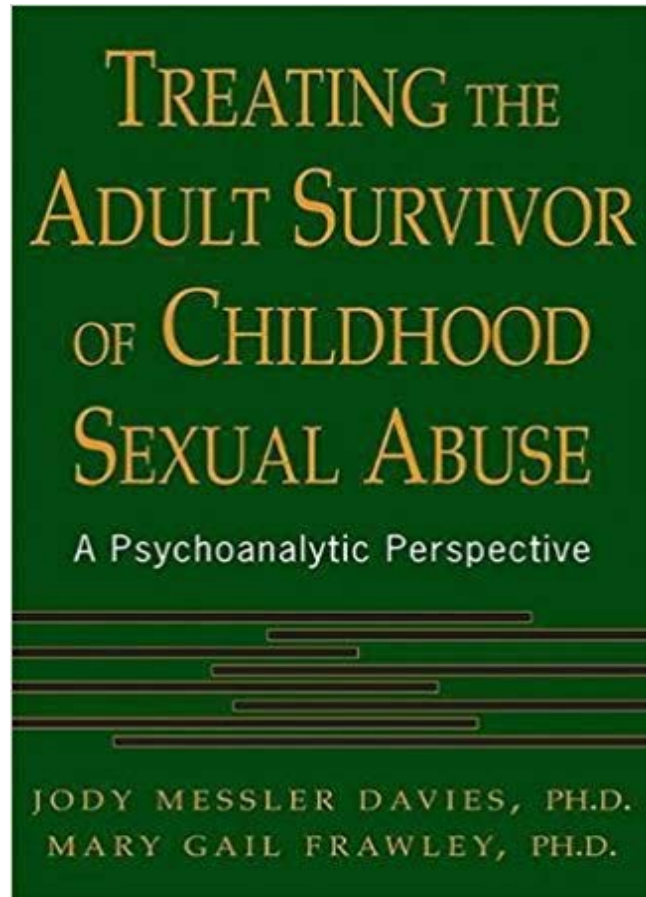
Bessel van der Kolk's integrative work on healing traumatic conditions



Unconscious, unverbalized intergenerational transmission of trauma

- ▶ Fraiberg, S., Adelson, E., & Shapiro, V. (1976). Ghosts in the nursery: A psychoanalytic approach to the problems of impaired infant-mother relationships. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 14, 387-421.
- ▶ Davoine, F., & Gaudilliere, J-M., trans. S. Fairfield (2004). *History beyond trauma: Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one cannot stay silent*. New York: Other Press.
- ▶ Stern, D. B. (2018). *The infinity of the unsaid: Unformulated experience, language, and the nonverbal*. New York: Routledge.

Childhood trauma and dissociated self-states



Clinical difficulties for which psychoanalytic ideas may be helpful

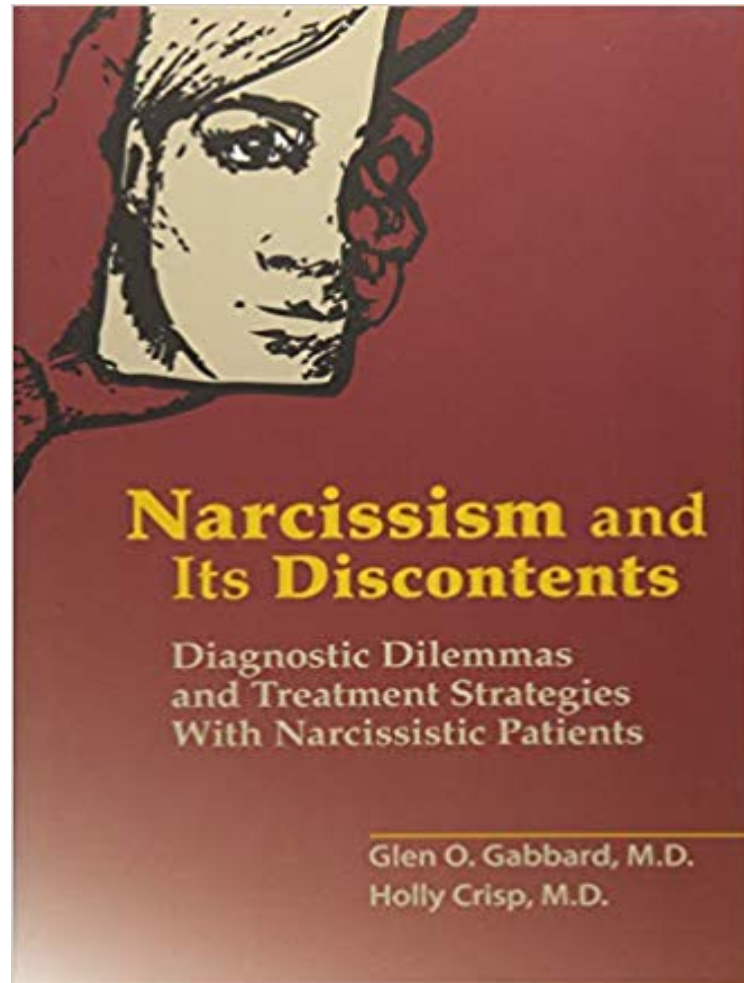
- ▶ 1. Severe personality disorders (personality organized in the borderline-to-psychotic range)
- ▶ 2. Complex trauma
- ▶ 3. Malignant narcissism

Depressive themes constitute the most common personality pattern in therapists

- ▶ Hyde, J. (2009). *Fragile narcissists or the guilty good: What drives the personality of the psychotherapist?* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.



Glen Gabbard and Holly Crisp, 2018: synthesis of ideas about narcissism



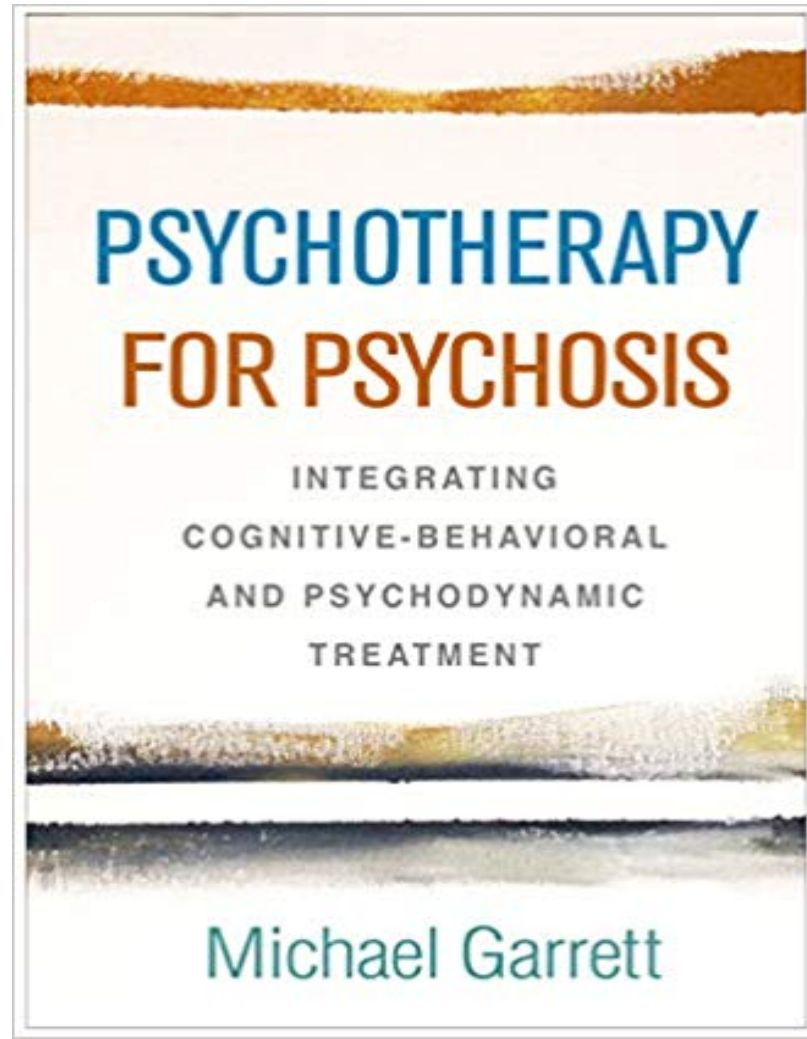
Some therapeutic possibilities for working with narcissistic clients

- ▶ Remembering that this is the best way this person knows how to relate to another;
- ▶ Focusing on whether the patient has made his or her needs explicit;
- ▶ Focusing on thanking and apologizing;
- ▶ Thanking and apologizing from the therapist: exemplifying that one can maintain one's self-esteem without having to be without need and without mistakes;
- ▶ Embedding all intervention in **respectful appreciation of realistic positives** in the person;
- ▶ Exemplifying humor in the face of devaluation.

Clinical difficulties for which psychoanalytic ideas may be helpful

- ▶ 1. Severe personality disorders (personality organized in the borderline-to-psychotic range)
- ▶ 2. Complex trauma
- ▶ 3. Malignant narcissism
- ▶ 4. Psychotic suffering

Integrating CBTp with psychoanalytic understanding of psychosis (2019)



Clinical implications of a dimensional view of psychosis

- ▶ It allows therapists and patients to relate empathically as one vulnerable human being to another.
- ▶ It permits therapists to think about and address issues of safety as central to patients in the psychotic range.
- ▶ Psychotic-level dynamics of terror and humiliation require clinicians to be both realistically authoritative and profoundly egalitarian.
- ▶ Normalizing is usually important for patients with psychotic tendencies.
- ▶ Education is usually necessary for patients dealing with psychotic confusions.
- ▶ Therapists of patients with psychotic tendencies need to be especially appreciative of health-seeking aspects of their symptoms.
- ▶ Therapy should be conversational and active.

Therapy with patients with psychotic suffering: Classic resources

- ▶ Fromm-Reichmann, F. (1950). *Principles of intensive psychotherapy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ▶ Sullivan, H. S. (1962). *Schizophrenia as a human process*. New York: Norton.
- ▶ Searles, H. F. (1965). *Collected papers on schizophrenia and related subjects*. New York: International Universities Press.
- ▶ Arieti, S. (1974). *Interpretation of schizophrenia* (2nd ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- ▶ Karon, B. P., & VandenBos, G. R. (1981). *Psychotherapy of schizophrenia: The treatment of choice*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- ▶ Eigen, M. (1986). *The psychotic core*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- ▶ Sass, L. A. (1992). *Madness and modernism: Insanity in the light of modern art, literature, and thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- ▶ Steiner, J. (1993). *Psychic retreats: Pathological organizations in psychotic, neurotic and borderline patients*. London: Routledge.

Therapy with patients with psychotic suffering: Newer resources

- ▶ Atwood, G. E. (2011). *The abyss of madness*. New York: Routledge.
- ▶ McWilliams, N. (2015). More simply human: On the universality of madness. *Psychosis*, 7, 63-71.
- ▶ Garrett, M., & Turkington, D. (2011). CBT for psychosis in a psychoanalytic frame. *Psychosis*, 3, 2-13.
- ▶ Marcus, E. R. (2003). *Psychosis and near psychosis: Ego functions, symbol structure, treatment*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press.
- ▶ Saks, E. R. (2008). *The center cannot hold: My journey through madness*. New York: Hyperion Press.
- ▶ Lauveng, A. (2012). *A road back from schizophrenia: A memoir*. New York: Skyhorse.
- ▶ Werman, D. S. (2015). *The practice of supportive psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge.
- ▶ Cosgro, M. & Widener, A. (2018). *The widening scope of psychoanalysis: Collected essays of Bertram Karon*. Queens, NY: International Psychoanalytic Books.

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect.

Thank you!

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