



Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life (Psychoanalytic Inquiry Book Series)

Robert D. Stolorow, George E. Atwood

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In this volume, the authors complete the circle begun with *Faces in a Cloud* (1979) and continued with *Structures of Subjectivity* (1984) and *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach* (1987- with Brandchaft). They now extend intersubjectivity theory to a rethinking of the foundational pillars of psychoanalytic theory since they have already demonstrated the degree to which psychological theory is influenced by the subjective world of the psychological theorist, explored the various "structures of subjectivity" that organize the subjective world, and applied the intersubjective perspective to a broad array of clinical issues.

Beginning with an in-depth critique of the concept of the isolated individual mind, Stolorow and Atwood argue that this myth has long obstructed recognition of the intersubjective foundations of psychological life. The authors then proceed to a series of chapters that reframe, from the standpoint of intersubjectivity theory, basic assumptions of the psychoanalytic theory of mental life. Concluding chapters on "varieties of therapeutic alliance" and "varieties of therapeutic impasse" further exemplify the ability of intersubjectivity theory to reorient the psychoanalytic therapist, thus providing fresh strategies for understanding and addressing the most challenging clinical contingencies.

Contexts of Being is the conceptual culmination of Stolorow and Atwood's earlier studies, giving them a forum to explain why the perspective of intersubjectivity cannot be reduced to a clinical sensibility that can be grafted onto existing psychoanalytic theory. Rather, the authors argue, the intersubjective perspective has methodological and epistemological implications that mandate a radical revision of all aspects of psychoanalytic thought. Not only a cogent elaboration of these implications, the volume is also an important first step in effecting the sweeping revision that follows from them.

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