

Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association

<http://apa.sagepub.com/>

Book Review: A Question of Time: Freud in the Light of Heidegger's Temporality

Robert D. Stolorow

J Am Psychoanal Assoc 2013 61: 1251

DOI: 10.1177/0003065113510038

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://apa.sagepub.com/content/61/6/1251>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



American Psychoanalytic Association

Additional services and information for *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://apa.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://apa.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

REFERENCES

- FEDER, S. (1992). *Charles Ives: "My Father's Song."* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- OSTWALD, P., & ZEGANS, L., EDs. (1993). *The Pleasures and Perils of Genius: Mostly Mozart.* Madison, CT: International Universities Press.
- STEINBERG, M. (1984). Liner notes, *Mozart Piano Sonatas*, Alfred Brendel (CD). London: Philips, p. 2.

Aaron H. Esman
115 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
E-mail: ahesman@earthlink.net



A QUESTION OF TIME: FREUD IN THE LIGHT OF HEIDEGGER'S TEMPORALITY. By *Joel Pearl*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013, x + 226 pp., \$70.00.

DOI: 10.1177/0003065113510038

Joel Pearl teaches philosophy at the Academic College of Communication, Rishon LeZion, Israel; he is also a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and has been a candidate member at the Tel-Aviv Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis. His research and publications, of which the volume under review is a prime example, have focused on phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and their intersection. *A Question of Time: Freud in the Light of Heidegger's Temporality* is a magnificent piece of interdisciplinary scholarship, one that warmed my own post-Cartesian psychoanalytic heart.

Like Binswanger (1946) and Boss (1963) before him, Pearl proceeds from the "top down"—that is, he begins with the philosophical presuppositions implicit in Freudian theory and with the fundamental existential structures delineated by Heidegger, and then goes on to show how the latter can (and should) transform psychoanalysis. Such an approach contrasts with one, such as my own (Stolorow 2011), that proceeds from the "bottom up"—that begins with clinical phenomena and an effort to rethink the psychoanalytic process phenomenologically and then finds philosophical support for this endeavor in Heidegger's existential analytic.

The aim of Pearl's study is to rethink the fundamentals of Freudian theory in light of Heidegger's conception of the essential temporality of human existence. In Part 1 of the book, which is essentially a philosophical introduction, Pearl presents an overview of the contrasting visions of the human subject offered by Descartes and Kant, on one hand, and Heidegger, on the other. In Part 2 he shows how the Freudian psyche incorporated uncritically the Cartesian and Kantian conception of time. Finally, in Part 3, he offers his view of a psychoanalytic theory transformed and enriched by Heidegger's conception of temporality. I take up each part in turn.

Part 1. Pearl's philosophical overview is reader-friendly and quite comprehensive. He explicates the Cartesian/Kantian subject as both isolated from its world (the infamous subject-object split) and standing outside of time. Drawing on Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time* (1927), supplemented by remarks from his less opaque 1927 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Heidegger 1975), Pearl outlines how Heidegger showed that the existing human being is inseparable from both its world and its lived experience of time.

Heidegger's aim in *Being and Time* was to elucidate the basic structures of the human kind of Being, which he called *existence*—a Heideggerian term of art referring to how we are intelligible to ourselves *as* human beings.

The first half of *Being and Time* (Division I) is devoted primarily to an elucidation of our "average everyday" way of existing and understanding ourselves. The second half (Division II) is devoted to authentic existing and its relation to our temporal constitution. Because he seeks to rethink Freudian psychoanalysis from the standpoint of Heidegger's conception of temporality, Pearl places much greater emphasis on the psychoanalytic relevance of Division II. I, in contrast, see Division I as also holding enormous importance in providing a philosophical foundation for psychoanalysis's movement toward more relational perspectives. Let me explain briefly.

As I am sure Pearl would agree, traditional Freudian theory is pervaded by the Cartesian "myth of the isolated mind" (Stolorow and Atwood 1992, p. 7), which bifurcated the experiential world into inner and outer regions, severed both mind from body and cognition from affect, reified and absolutized the resulting divisions, and pictured the mind as an objective entity that takes its place among other objects, a *thinking thing* that has an inside with contents and that looks out on an

external world from which it is essentially estranged. The Freudian psyche is fundamentally a Cartesian mind in that it is a container of contents (instinctual energies, wishes, representations, etc.), a thinking *thing* that, precisely because it is a thing, is ontologically decontextualized, fundamentally separated from its world. Heidegger, by contrast, sought to refind the unity of our Being, split asunder in the Cartesian bifurcations, by unveiling the basic structure of our average everyday existing as a rich contextual whole—Being-in-the-world—in which human Being is saturated with the world in which we dwell, just as the world we inhabit is drenched in human meanings and purposes. In Heidegger's vision, our Being and our world in their indissoluble unity primordially and constantly contextualize one another. Especially important for contemporary psychoanalysis is Heidegger's emphasis on the primacy of affectivity in disclosing our context-embeddedness. Heidegger's ontological contextualism, as explicated in Division I of *Being and Time*, provides a solid philosophical grounding for a psychoanalytic phenomenological contextualism (see Stolorow 2011).

Part 2. I found Part 2, in which Pearl unveils what he calls the *temporal lacuna* in Freud's methodology and theorizing, to be particularly illuminating. According to Pearl's fascinating historical account, this lacuna derived from Freud's studies with the proto-phenomenologist Franz Brentano over the course of a three-year period and Freud's subsequent wholesale incorporation of Brentano's metaphysical conception of time into psychoanalytic method and theory, where it remained unchanged. This conception, which actually harks back to Aristotle's metaphysics and was carried forth by both Descartes and Kant, pictures time as an infinite succession of "nows" unfolding in linear fashion. (Interestingly, another of Brentano's students, the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, developed an alternative to Brentano's linear time, which was later further radicalized by Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger.) In addition to being characteristic of average everydayness, linear time is the conception of time that underlies scientific method, because it locates the succession of nows in the external world where they can be counted and calculated and the intervals between them measured by a subject who stands outside the time being objectified and studied. Thus, his adoption of linear time was consistent with Freud's wish for his psychoanalysis to attain the status of a natural or objective science.

Pearl demonstrates that the linear conception of time adopted by Freud conceals the temporal fabric of human existence itself, as it shows

up in the patient-analyst encounter. In some beautiful psychoanalytic-historical scholarship, Pearl exposes this concealment of temporality in Freud's interpretive method, first in the famous case of Dora, and then in four of Freud's major works spanning the period from 1905 to 1937. Within the framework of time conceived as a linear succession of present moments—what Heidegger called a *metaphysics of presence*—transference, for example, could be interpreted only as a temporal disruption and the unconscious as a container of experiences derailed from the timeline by repression, and these and other clinical phenomena could not be grasped as manifestations of our temporal constitution itself. For anyone interested in the making of psychoanalysis's "philosophical unconscious" conscious, the scholarship in Part 2 alone makes *A Question of Time* a very worthwhile read.

Part 3. The third part of the book, "Psycho-Ontology," is the most ambitious one. Here Pearl seeks to reformulate key concepts in psychoanalysis as manifestations of the temporality at the heart of our existence, rather than being derived from objectively assessable processes positioned along a linear timeline. It is here that Pearl draws heavily on Division II of *Being and Time*, wherein Heidegger developed his claim that human existence in all its modes is intelligible or makes sense only on the basis of its temporal constitution. Heidegger, in essence, argued that the whole structure of human existence had to be brought into view—namely, that it could be authentically intelligible only in terms of its *stretching along* between birth and the possibility of death. In contrast to the linear notion of time, the temporality revealed in this stretching along is a unity of past, present, and future, with each dimension always transcending itself and pointing toward the other two. However, since for Heidegger authenticity entailed an owning-up to the ever present possibility of death, leaning into future possibilities attained particular prominence in his account of our temporal constitution.

Drawing on the work of Loewald (1980), who studied with Heidegger, Pearl argues, much too complexly to be captured in this review, that Freud's structural theory is undergirded by the temporal relations among past, present, and future, with the future taking precedence as in Heidegger. More interesting to me is the way Pearl, returning to the case of Dora, applies the unitary structure of our temporality to an interpretation of clinical phenomena, such as transference and repression. Rather than being seen as a disturbance in the normal (i.e., linear) structure of the mind, as Freud would have it, transference is grasped as a return of

the past into the present pointing to the future, a manifestation of the temporal motion inherent to human existence itself. Similarly, repression, in barring access to aspects of the past, also closes off aspects of the present and future that depend on that past, thereby fracturing temporality's unitary structure.

The vision of the psychoanalytic encounter that emerges from Pearl's rethinking of Freud in the light of Heidegger's temporality is a distinctively intersubjective one, in which the analyst dwells in the temporal world of the patient, and the patient inhabits the temporal world of the analyst. I found myself wishing that Pearl had shown us how he is guided by this vision in his own psychoanalytic work, rather than just applying it to a reconceptualization of one of Freud's cases. In my own bottom-up approach, I began with the experience of emotional trauma (my own, actually) and worked my way up to Heidegger's existential analytic (Stolorow 2011). I found that trauma devastatingly disrupts the average everyday linear conception of time and exposes the unitary structure of our temporal existence, even as it fractures it. Experiences of emotional trauma become freeze-framed into an eternal present in which one remains forever trapped, or to which one is condemned to be perpetually returned through the retraumatizations supplied by life's slings and arrows. In the region of trauma all duration or stretching along collapses, past becomes present, and future loses all meaning other than endless repetition. Traumatic temporality is a variant of authentic temporality, disclosed in our traumatizing confrontations with human finitude.¹

I am grateful to have encountered Pearl's highly illuminating top-down explication of what Heidegger's conception of temporality has to offer Freudian psychoanalysis. His interdisciplinary synthesis and my own seem to complement each other nicely.

REFERENCES

- BINSWANGER, L. (1946). The existential analysis school of thought. In *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, ed. R. May, E. Angel, & H. Ellenberger. New York: Basic Books, 1958, pp. 191–213.
- BOSS, M. (1963). *Psychoanalysis and Daseinanalysis*, transl. L. Lefebvre. New York: Basic Books.
- HEIDEGGER, M. (1927). *Being and Time*, transl. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

¹ Interestingly, Heidegger (1975) interprets the idea of an infinite succession of nows as an inauthentic temporality that “forgets its own essential finitude” (p. 273).

- HEIDEGGER, M. (1975). *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, transl. A. Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- LOEWALD, H. (1980). *Papers on Psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- STOLOROW, R.D. (2011). *World, Affectivity, Trauma: Heidegger and Post-Cartesian Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.
- STOLOROW, R.D., & ATWOOD, G.E. (1992). *Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.

Robert D. Stolorow
2444 Wilshire Boulevard, #624
Santa Monica, CA 90403
E-mail: robertdstolorow@gmail.com



LE MALÊTRE (THE MALAISE). By René Kaës. Paris: Dunod, 2012, vii + 278 pp., €26.00.

DOI: 10.1177/0003065113510042

In his new book, *Le Malêtre*, René Kaës, a French scholar and analyst who collaborated with Didier Anzieu, proposes a contemporary revision of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. The choice of a neologism for the title, *malêtre*, literally the antonym of well-being, is significant of Kaës's need to reformulate the new manifestations of malaise and psychic suffering in contemporary societies.

This book is the culmination of his lifelong clinical and theoretical research on intersubjective transmission in groups. Kaës has been a prolific author, and it is unfortunate that only one of his books is now available in English translation, *Linking, Alliances, and Shared Spaces: Groups and the Psychoanalyst* (2007). In addition, an exhaustive review of Kaës's work by Lewis Kirshner was published in *JAPA* (2006).

Kaës postulates that theoretical changes in psychoanalysis since Freud are intertwined with the mutations of contemporary societies (technological and biotechnological changes, transformations in family structure, migrations of populations, and terrorist activities). *Malêtre* relates to the difficulty of being and existing among others in society. Thus it is not only a feeling like *malaise*, but a topographic term identifying different pathologies present at the intersection of intrasubjective and intersubjective life. For Kaës, the bedrock of psychic existence derives not only from