

Driving Soma: A Transformational Process in the Analytic Encounter

Patrick Miller



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Plunged into the experience of an analytic session, analysand and analyst can come closer to what Freud terms the "primary processes". A clear-cut distinction between body and mind tends to become blurred while the bodily-egos of both protagonists are more effectively present to each other. How deeply can they affect each other, and can the transformational working through of the drives give access to potential transformations not only within the dimension of the erogeneous body but also of the soma?

This book explores these complex issues from a number of different perspectives: the clinical approach of patients with somatic diseases; the metapsychology of the analyst at work, including different aspects and functions of formal regression; the function of figurability of certain bodily enactments; the specific use the analyst can make of his own subjectivity (relationship between subjectivity and neutrality) and how this leads to a specific way of thinking about intersubjectivity in psychoanalysis; and the way in which some works of art can enrich how we confront the body-mind-soma issue in our analytic experiences with our patients.

An attempt to erase the body from our field of investigation, not only the erogeneous body of infantile sexuality but also the body of soma, is active in every psychoanalytic culture. The author, who was trained in France, draws on Lacan and examines the way in which he progressively tried to disembody the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. He also argues that psychoanalysts could have a mutually enriching dialogue with neuro-biologists, not denying their differences of approach, but rather stemming out of them.

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