



The Analyst's Experience of the Depressive Position: The melancholic errand of psychoanalysis

Steven H. Cooper

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In *The Analyst's Experience of the Depressive Position: The Melancholic Errand of Psychoanalysis*, Steven Cooper explores a subject matter previously applied more exclusively to patients, but rarely to psychoanalysts. Cooper probes the analyst's experience of the depressive position in the analytic situation. These experiences include the pleasures and warmth of helping patients to bear what appears unbearable, as well as the poignant experiences of limitation, incompleteness, repetition and disappointment as a vital part of clinical work. He describes a seam in clinical work in which the analyst is always trying to find and re-find a position from which he can help patients to work with these experiences.

The Analyst's Experience of the Depressive Position includes an exploration of the analyst's participation and resistance to helping patients hold some of the most unsettling parts of their experience. Cooper draws some analogies between elements of theory about aesthetic experience in terms of how we bear new and old experience. He provides an examination of the patient as an artist of sorts and the analyst as a form of psychic boundary artist. Just as the creative act of art involves the capacity to transform pain and ruin into the depressive position, so does the co-creation of how we understand the patient's mind through the mind of the analyst.

The Analyst's Experience of the Depressive Position explores a rich, provocative and long overdue topic relevant to psychoanalysts, psycho-dynamically oriented psychotherapists, as well as students and teachers of both psychoanalysis and psychodynamic psychotherapy.

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