

Relational Freedom: Emergent Properties of the Interpersonal Field (Psychoanalysis in a New Key Book Series)

By Donnel B. Stern

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Relational Freedom: Emergent Properties of the Interpersonal Field addresses the interpersonal field in clinical psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, especially the emergent qualities of the field. The book builds on the foundation of unformulated experience, dissociation, and enactment defined and explored in Stern's previous, widely read books.

Stern never considers the analyst or the patient alone; all clinical events take place between them and involve them both. Their conscious and unconscious conduct and experience are the field's substance. We can say that the changing nature of the field determines the experience that patient and analyst can create in one another's presence; but we can also say that the therapeutic dyad, simply by doing their work together, ceaselessly configures and reconfigures the field. "Relational freedom" is Stern's own interpersonal and relational conception of the field, which he compares, along with other varieties of interpersonal/relational field theory, to the work of Bionian field theorists such as Madeleine and Willy Baranger, and Antonino Ferro. Other chapters concern the role of the field in accessing the frozen experience of trauma, in creating theories of therapeutic technique, evaluating quantitative psychotherapy research, evaluating the utility of the concept of unconscious phantasy, treating the hard-to-engage patient, and in devising the ideal psychoanalytic institute.

Relational Freedom is a clear, authoritative, and impassioned statement of the current state of interpersonal and relational psychoanalytic theory and clinical thinking. It will interest anyone who wants to stay up to date with current developments in American psychoanalysis, and for those newer to the field it will serve as an introduction to many of the important questions in contemporary psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists of all kinds will profit from the book's thoughtful discussions of clinical problems and quandaries.

Donnel B. Stern, Ph.D.., a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist in private practice in New York City, serves as Training and Supervising Analyst at the William Alanson White Institute, and Adjunct Clinical Professor and Consultant at the NYU Postodoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. He is the founder and editor of "Psychoanalysis in a New Key," a book series published by Routledge.

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Book Series) By Donnel B. Stern Bibliography

- Published on: 2015-06-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .63" w x 6.14" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Stern has the delightful skill of writing with an elegance that enables a reader such as me, who is not steeped in the psychoanalytical tradition, to readily grasp quite elusive and complex ideas and apply them to our own thinking as a therapist...I am left feeling that it has definitely been a worthwhile read." **- Steve Page, *Therapy Today***

"Donnel Stern's Relational Freedom *is a welcome contribution to the field of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in which he reinvents the concept of emergence as the experiential component of the interpersonal field, and brings the concept to life in his many, in depth, clinical discussions. What I find truly remarkable about this book is that it offers a way of encompassing relational theory, field theory, Bionian concepts, and modern Freudian thinking, while so many others deal with these perspectives as if they are at war with one another."* - **Thomas Ogden**, **M. D., Personal and Supervising Analyst, Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California**

"Stern's great ability to make very complex concepts comprehensible is once again in evidence in this marvelous book of rare depth. This is the book every "insider" will want to read and secretly wish they had written....It is replete with delightful clinical vignettes that reveal the author's method of working: free, creative, unconstrained by preconstructed models, and always open to whatever emerges in psychoanalytic session (or as Bion would put it to whatever 'evolves' in the session). Rarely have I felt my heart race whilst reading clinical material and such an urge to read on as though these were the final pages of a thriller. If a book may be described as food for thought, this one is a veritable banquet!" - **Antonino Ferro, MD, President of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society**

"In this exciting and wide-ranging new book, Donnel Stern takes the reader on an exhilarating tour of the contemporary psychoanalytic landscape. For many years, a leading figure in the theoretical articulation of the Interpersonal dimension of Relational theory, Stern here compares and contrasts his own way of viewing the psychoanalytic process to those of Contemporary Freudians, Object Relationists, Bionian Field Theorists and others. Stern's capacity to articulate complex theory is remarkable, and his discussions are always punctuated with powerful clinical examples that further explicate his perspective. He is the consummate teacher and anyone interested in understanding where psychoanalysis is heading today must read this book…maybe several times over!" - **Jody Messler Davies, Ph.D. Editor in Chief Emeritus of Psychoanalytic Dialogues: The International Journal of Relational Perspectives; Faculty and Supervisor New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis.**

About the Author

Donnel B. Stern, Ph.D.., a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist in private practice in New York City, serves as Training and Supervising Analyst at the William Alanson White Institute, and Adjunct Clinical Professor and Consultant at the NYU Postodoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. He is the author of *Unformulated Experience: From Dissociation to Imagination in Psychoanalysis* (The Analytic Press, 1997) and Partners in Thought: Working with Unformulated Experience, Dissociation, and Enactment (Routledge, 2010). He is the founder and editor of "Psychoanalysis in a New Key," a book series published by Routledge.

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