

Book launch October 2022
Psychoanalysis of the psychoanalytic frame revisited: A New Look at the Work of José Bleger
Edited by
Carlos Moguillansky and Howard Levine

As the past chair of the IPA Publications Committee, I want to start by thanking Silvia Fletchner, the new chair, for inviting me to participate in this book launch.

This book, *Psychoanalysis of the psychoanalytic frame revisited: a new look at the work of José Bleger* has been published in one of the five Series of the IPA Publications Committee, the "Classics revisited" series. This Series was launched by Gennaro Saragnano in 2015 who was, at that time, the chair of the Publications Committee and was introduced after four earlier successful series published under the auspices of the International Psychoanalytic Association. So far 3 books have been published in this series. These are: *Playing and Reality Revisited: A New look at Winnicott's classic work*; *Attacks on linking: A New look at Bion's classic work* and *André Green Revisited: Representation and the work of the negative*. The aim of this latest series is to make available to psychoanalysts and other scholars in related fields, a reinterpretation of the classics of psychoanalysis by leading analysts from various countries and different theoretical approaches, in light of the most recent developments in contemporary psychoanalysis.

The purpose is to underline the way in which these “classics” that have marked the history of the clinical and theoretical development of psychoanalysis have contributed and continue to contribute to psychoanalytic thought today.

It was with considerable enthusiasm that the members of the publication committee selected Bleger’s paper, *Psychoanalysis of the psychoanalytic frame* as one of these “classics” that have marked the history of the clinical and theoretical development of psychoanalysis. This volume becomes the fourth of this Series. Bleger is one of the most renowned pioneers of Latin American psychoanalysis. He was born in Argentina in 1922 and died unfortunately very young in 1972 at 50 years of age. He was creative thinker, an intellectual with multiple interests.

In *Psychoanalysis of the psychoanalytic setting*, Bleger presents new and striking insights about the setting. Although Bleger agrees with Winnicott who considered the frame as the psychoanalytic situation composed of the “summation of all the details of management”, Bleger introduced a distinction between the process and the frame. The frame consists of the constant elements within whose limits the process occurs. What is most original in Bleger’s ideas about the frame is his endeavor to explore it using a psychoanalytic inquiry and lens. He designates the psychoanalytic frame as a non-process within which the analytic process takes place, the background of a figure as in Gestalt psychology. If the setting is kept constant, it remains

unperceived. When for different reasons, disruption occurs, the setting suddenly changes its status: “from the background of a *Gestalt* into a figure, that is, into a process”.

A clinical aspect that ensues because of this new perspective of the frame, now seen as a non-process, is that its disruptions reveal that something has been projected onto it. Bleger considered the most primitive aspects of the personality, that is, the symbiotic and psychotic part of the personality, to be deposited in the frame and to remain silent until they are disturbed. The analysis of these primitive aspects of the personality, when they become part of the process, are amenable to psychoanalytic interpretation.

In this book, the contributors from the different regions of the IPA highlight and discuss the way in which Bleger’s work on the notion of the frame has influenced their psychoanalytic thinking. I strongly believe that the diverse points of view, have brought about a fruitful debate that could result in a broadening of the definition and scope of the notion of the frame. It is important to underline that these different conceptualizations have important clinical implications. The way one conceptualizes the frame, will without a doubt, influence the direction of analytic work. Most of the chapters in this book include clinical material which enriches and clarifies the ideas discussed.

I am thankful to the editors of this book, Carlos Mogueillansky and Howard Levine for having gathered excellent contributions which resulted in this volume composed of 9 chapters.

There are two chapters from Latin American authors. The first is from Miguel Leivi, from Buenos Aires, whose chapter is *On Bleger’s view of the psychoanalytic frame: A critical Approach*. Here, the author, highlights, amongst many topics, the serious difficulty of benefiting from the advantages of the clinical situation when the frame is used online. The second chapter is by Jose Fischbein and Susana Vincour Fischbein also from Buenos Aires. This chapter is titled *On the Psychoanalytic Frame and ambiguity as axes for the study of Bleger’s works*. Here, the authors aim is to consider Bleger’s developments on the psychoanalytic frame and the concept of ambiguity which they apply to the understanding of current clinical material.

There are three chapters from American authors: Alberto Pieczanski’s chapter focuses on *Revisiting Jose Bleger’s Ideas in times of Pandemic*. The author considers the way in which Bleger’s ideas can help us in thinking about the decisions psychoanalysts have made in regards to the frame during the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Judy Eekhoff’s chapter explores *Psychic equivalence as an aspect of symbiosis*. She expands upon Bleger’s ideas of symbiosis and elaborates on the way they can be helpful in working with unrepresented states. The third American author is Howard Levine (Boston) co-editor of this book, whose chapter is entitled *On things that are not visible: Jose Bleger: A clinician for our times?* Here the author underlines the significant value of Bleger’s contribution to contemporary psychoanalysis where, by clarifying

the metapsychological status and meaning of the frame, he has deepened not only our understanding of the frame but of analysis itself.

There are also four contributors from Europe and the UK. The first is by Leo Bleger from Paris, whose chapter explores the question *What is the setting after all?* The author, being perplexed by the way in which the notion of setting has evolved, explores what this development is all about and underlines the difficulties that some conceptions of the setting raise. A second author is John Churcher from England whose contribution is titled *The psychoanalytic setting, embodiment and presence: Exploring Jose Bleger's concept of "encuadre"*. The author summarizes some of Jose Bleger's concepts that help one understand the psychoanalytic setting. He considers how they might be applied in a radically modified setting which involves telecommunications. A third author from this group is Ricardo Lombardi from Rome who writes on *Thirst for infinity and the analytic frame: Reflections on Bleger and Matte-Blanco*. Here, the author discusses the relationship between Bleger's research on the psychoanalytic frame and the deep mental functions described by Matte-Blanco. And finally, Bernd Nissen from Berlin focuses on *Understanding early experiences: Bleger's contribution to the undifferentiation of early states*. The author highlights the notions of undifferentiation, ambiguity, and glis-chro-caric position which together carry the potential of deepening our understanding of the topic of unrepresented states. I also want to mention Carlos Moguillansky (Buenos Aires), who wrote an excellent introduction to the book.

As one can see, the variety, richness and originality of the contributions makes this book a valuable addition to the IPA Classics Revisited Series. It will be of great value to those who want to become more acquainted with Bleger's seminal paper which should be considered a classic in the way Italo Calvino considers it. I will end with two of his quotations on this matter: "A classic is a work which persists as a background noise even when a present that is totally incompatible with it holds sway" a second one: "Every rereading of a classic is a reading of discovery".

Gabriela Legorreta
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