The purpose of this conference is to explicate the profound, original illuminations of trauma and psychosis contained within History Beyond Trauma by Francoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudilliere. Over the course of this ambitious volume these psychoanalysts integrate 30 years of clinical and theoretical research on psychotic experience.

Drawing upon their studies in philosophy and classics and experience as professors of sociology, the authors approach madness not as a symptom, pathology, or diagnosis in a manual, but rather as a Place. This is the Place where the Symbolic Order which guarantees an individual’s connection to language, history, and social relations has ruptured, exploded or disappeared. Consequently, one of the most important insights found in this work is that the psychotic is engaged in a research investigation into the nature and history of this Place; he or she is a seeker.

The authors radically locate psychosis within a social and historical field. Within psychotherapy the therapist is second in command to the patient – the Principal Investigator – who desperately attempts to articulate an unspeakable dimension of trauma and catastrophe, which has come to be foreclosed in individual or social history. Drawing upon their own memories, as well as their European identities, the authors develop a model of trauma rooted in the paradigm of war; the psychotic patient thus brings a war zone into the consulting room. Ultimately, principles derived from war psychiatry are employed as salient clinical tools in approaching trauma and madness.

Each of Davoine’s and Gaudilliere’s major theoretical concepts will be here illustrated via vivid clinical material. It will be the intention of this Symposium to communicate the propositions of History Beyond Trauma with great clarity, and to demonstrate their broad relevance for those engaged in the investigation and treatment of psychosis.

PRESENTER
James E. Gorney, Ph.D., is in independent practice in Knoxville, Tennessee. A graduate of the William Alanson White Institute for Psychoanalysis in New York, he is the author of numerous presentations and papers on Winnicott, Lacan, self-psychology and innovations in psychoanalytic technique. Dr. Gorney served on the staff of the Austen Riggs Center and has taught at New York Hospital-Cornell, Duquesne University, and the University of Tennessee. He is past president of the Appalachian Psychoanalytic Society and has been a recipient of the Hans Strupp Award for excellence in psychoanalytic education.

OBJECTIVES:
At the end of this presentation attendees will be able to:

1. Describe the profound, original illuminations of trauma and psychosis contained within History Beyond Trauma by Francoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudilliere.

2. Understand and articulate a patient’s desperate attempts to communicate to the therapist unspeakable dimensions of trauma and catastrophe which has come to be foreclosed in individual or social history.

3. Understand a different approach to madness not as a symptom, pathology or diagnosis in a manual but rather as a symbolic place within himself that he has lost touch with.

4. Conclude that the psychotic patient is engaged in a research investigation into the nature and history of the symbolic place within to apprehend what he has unconsciously hidden.

5. Understand that principles derived from war psychiatry are employed as salient clinical tools in approaching trauma and madness.

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