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The Unknowing of Psychoanalytic Art

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Abstract

Originally published in *Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books*, 1991, Vol 36(5), 430. Reviews the book, *The Art of Unknowing: Dimensions of Openness in Analytic Therapy* by Stephen Kurtz (1989). This is a book with a considerable stylistic charm, although considerable philosophical naivete. Its charm and talent lie mostly in its lyrical ability, its provocativeness, and its sheer evocativeness. At a time when most psychoanalytic writing has entered the stylistic doldrums, too frequently imitating the techno-jargon of manuals for automobile maintenance, it is refreshing to read the writing of an author who can bring to life reports of case studies and his emotional engagement with his patients and whose ideas are both entrancing and disconcerting. But for all these virtues for which this book is to be strongly recommended, mention must still be made of its failure to sustain its own thesis—its use of allusion and assertion instead of

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