

ON GENITAL LOVE
by Michael Balint, London

The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis
Published by Bailliere, Tindall and Cox,
Volume XXVII, 1947
Page 38:

4 . . .

98

To sum up: 'Genital love' in man is really a misnomer. We can find genital love in the true sense only in animals which develop in a straight, undistorted line from infantile ways of behaviour to mature genital sexuality - and then die. Man, that neotenic embryo, never reaches full maturity, he remains an embryo in his anatomical structure, in his emotional behaviour towards his elders and betters - and in his love life. What we call 'genital love' is a fusion of disagreeing elements: genital satisfaction and pregenital tenderness. The expression of this fusion is 'genital identification', and the reward for bearing the strain of this fusion is the possibility of regressing periodically for some happy moments to a really infantile stage of no reality testing, to the short-lived re-establishment of the complete union of micro- and macrocosmos.

