



IARPP 10th Anniversary Conference

THE LEGACY OF STEPHEN MITCHELL
Sustaining Creativity in Our Psychoanalytic Work

**Saturday, March 3rd
8:30 am – 10:00 am**

PANEL/ PAPER SESSION III

#1: Invited Panel: Stephen Mitchell Scholars

Presenters: Chaim Aharonson, MA, ISRAEL; Aleksander Dimitrijevic, PhD, SERBIA; Shlomo Beinart, PhD, ISRAEL; Marie Hoffman, PhD, USA and Ariel Liberman Isod, SPAIN

Discussant: Jade McGleughlin, MSW, USA

Moderator: Margaret Black, LCSW, USA

Abstract:

This panel will serve as an introduction to the Mitchell Scholars as well as provide an opportunity for them to discuss their work and the impact that Stephen Mitchell's thinking had on their development. The Mitchell Scholars are an internationally representative group of young psychoanalysts who, after being nominated by their respective community, were selected by the board of the Mitchell Scholarship Fund as having strong leadership potential within the field of relational psychoanalysis.

At the conclusion of this panel session conference participants will be able to:

1. Describe the way Stephen Mitchell's work inspired the development of young professionals in psychoanalysis
2. Describe some ideas about the application of relational psychoanalysis to education in Israel.
3. Describe some ideas about the relationship between relational thinking and the religious roots of Winnicott and Fairbairn.



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**#2: Response to the Other:
Developmental Enactment As A Bridging Concept Between Self Psychology &
Relational Psychoanalysis**

Presenter: Donna Orange, PhD, PsyD, USA

Discussants: Steven Stern, PsyD, USA & Stephen Hartman, PhD, USA

Moderator: Judith Levene, PhD, CANADA

Abstract:

This panel presents and discusses, in the context of Mitchell's questions about the analyst's personal engagement with the patient, an idea of enactment as a developmental process. It proposes that such an understanding might form a useful bridge or connection among psychoanalysts of diverse denominational allegiances that have previously found it difficult to speak with each other, in part because their languages differ. Both interlocutors have devoted themselves to dialogue among psychoanalytic communities as well as within them, and will explore the possibility that this concept might help. Much turns on the question of what "developmental" means, and what elements of the psychoanalytic situation, and what attitudes, may prevent enactment from deteriorating into unmitigated negativity.

Educational Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to distinguish between enactment as a general feature of psychoanalytic work and enactments as described by Bromberg.
2. Participants will be able to give an example of a "developmental enactment."



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PANEL/ PAPER SESSION III

#3: The Roles Of Time & Space In Psychoanalytic Theory & Practice

Presenters: Katie Gentile, PhD, USA and Steven Knoblauch, PhD, USA

Discussant: Sandra Kiersky, PhD, USA

Moderator: Maureen Murphy, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Gathering Time as Affect Regulation, Katie Gentile

In literature and cultural studies, theories of embodiment have renewed interest in time. In psychoanalysis Loewald advanced theory on time in development and Mitchell highlighted and expanded his ideas. This paper follows their lead, integrating Henri Bergson's ideas about time and space and recent research in neuroscience, to explore further time's foundational role of creating experience and regulating affect, thus, enabling us to come into being within relational spaces. For a detailed illustration I will be using one component of a larger project that collaboratively analyzed 18 years of one woman's diaries. This part of the project has not been published elsewhere, and the diarist was never my patient. As will be outlined in the paper, the activity of being, is to be in temporal motion, spatially traveling from past to present to future, building layers of continuous and simultaneous experience. Here affect regulation is always relational and emerges simultaneously with the ability to place the present into a horizontal, nonlinear temporal context where a pattern of discomfort and relief has been established and accumulated and can be called upon to "self"-soothe. Here language and symbolizing processes function as temporal reminders, continually engaging us in re-creating past experiences. Using Hannah's diary entry like a moment in a clinical session, I will provide an in-depth exploration of the temporal dimensions of affect regulation. Having her evolving process tracked in the diaries provides us with a unique window into the temporal foundations of affect regulation where it is clear that the innovative creation of embodied, relational self experience depends on our capacities to play with space and time.

Educational Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to identify the central role of our psychological constructions of time play in development.
2. Participants will be able to reflect on different forms of affect regulation and how they promote healing in the clinical relationship.



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#3: The Roles Of Time & Space In Psychoanalytic Theory & Practice (continued)

Presenters: Katie Gentile, PhD, USA and Steven Knoblauch, PhD, USA

Discussant: Sandra Kiersky, PhD, USA

Moderator: Maureen Murphy, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Rhythm'ning and Imagination, Steven Knoblauch

This presentation begins with a musical illustration (on saxophone) of how a certain progression of harmony in music, best known as the structure of "I Got Rhythm" can be approached in a novel way (using an example from the jazz artist, Thelonious Monk) where the rhythmic shifts and tonal directions take unexpected turns compared to the expected melodic patterning. The emotional impact of these shifts on the listener is briefly illustrated and discussed with the audience. This musical exercise becomes the point of reference for a comparative discussion of contemporary approaches for how an analyst can create or collapse timing and space for previously denied or dissociated emotional experience to emerge. With the first approach coming from contemporary object relations, the analyst uses attention to embodied registrations of experience to inhabit and open up space for imagination, for the patient to be able to think, feel, create and anticipate a future. This approach is then contrasted with several relational approaches for how an analyst can develop a mimetic identificatory experience entering, if not momentarily merging with a patient's embodied rhythms in interaction with the analyst's. With the first perspective, the analyst's attention to embodied participation opens up space for imagination. With the second perspective, the analyst's attention to embodied participation closes the distance or space between the two to find ways to break rigid repetition, creating the possibility for acting and imagining in new ways. A brief illustration is then offered in which both approaches can be compared for their limits and clinical usefulness.

Educational Objectives:

1. Participants will become more attuned to gestural and tonal communications in clinical work.
2. Participants will learn about the value of nonverbal clinical interventions.



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#4: Breaking the Tie: The Complications of Cutting Back or Ending Treatment

Presenters: Peggy Crastnopol, PhD, USA and Jill Salberg, PhD, USA

Discussant: Holly Levenkron, MSW, USA

Moderator: Brendan McPhilips, MBBS, MA Psych, AUSTRALIA

Abstract:

Cutting Back: Inflicting and Sustaining Loss, Peggy Crastnopol

Ending Treatment in Another Key: The Patient as Supervisor to the Analyst, Jill Salberg

This panel will look closely at the truism that leave-taking and loss are an inevitable part of attachment. How we negotiate the cutting back, winding down, or ending of a relationship will retroactively color how the relationship is metabolized and internalized. The topic of termination has recently been taken up and reconsidered by Relational analysts and the two papers in this panel will further this exploration by looking at the vicissitudes of reducing and terminating contact, both in the psychotherapeutic setting and in “real life.” The panel will pose a range of inquiries, along the lines of: who evaluates a person’s desire to reduce or end contact as appropriate and timely or as resistance? What if the two parties involved disagree about that designation? Is rupture and injury inevitable when we detach or are other experiences conceivable? Do the issues of authority, self-determination, and the balancing of individuality with mutuality loom large at a decision point about altering or ending a relationship? Although cutting back sessions or ending treatment may reflect growth and change, it also inevitably implies loss. How are the relative values to be negotiated?

In the spirit of (and paraphrasing) Stephen Mitchell, we will consider, what does the analyst know and what does the patient need in order to make optimal decisions about separation, and to make letting go more helpful than harmful. The panel will look at multiple sides of these issues, both the constructive and injurious aspects. Clinical material will be used throughout, and our discussant will compare and contrast the presenters’ points and offer added perspective.

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe different understandings of analytic authority and how that authority impacts decisions around termination of the treatment.
2. Articulate techniques for utilizing playful curiosity as a means to foster analytic dialogue with the patient about endings.
3. List indicators that the patient is unconsciously ready for termination, whereas formerly those indicators might have been viewed as resistance or enactment.
4. Identify and describe subtle signs of self-withdrawal and its impact on the analytic dyad, whether it occurs in the analyst or the patient.
5. Articulate strategies for reducing the injury inflicted by unconscious tendencies to attenuate attachment, whether this is a characterological patterning or a situational occurrence, in the psychotherapeutic relationship or in everyday life.
6. Differentiate among diverse motivations behind “cutting back” and to explain the consequences of each for the termination process.



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#5: On the Subject of Subjectivity

Presenters: Alioscia Boschioli, PhD, ITALY and James Fosshage, PhD, USA

Discussant: Janine de Peyer, LCSW, USA

Moderator: Patricia Harney, PhD, USA

Abstract:

When A Disorganized Subjectivity Prevents the Building of an Authentic “Subjectuality,”
Alioscia Boschioli

This study focuses on the relationship between subjectivity, authenticity and the building of what I call our “subjectuality”, meant as the perception of one’s own subjectivity. I will use as starting point some philosophical premises (Husserl and Heidegger) and some psychoanalytical theories on subjectivity (and its processes and organizations) and on authenticity (as quality of self-perception of one’s self in internal and external intersubjective contexts). After a brief introduction of Sara, a patient I have been following for 6 years, I will try to understand what kind of relationship exists between the processes underlying and preceding conscious and unconscious experiences and creating what Mitchell calls “personal meaning” (or the transcendental structure of my subjectivity) and its perception: the perception of myself while I experience my subjectivity and the epistemological, aesthetic (and indirectly) ontological value of the constructions of meaning organized around me, both as object and subject. The aim is to explore how the experience of being ourselves, of being the person we are, of being and feeling our own “subjectuality” can be represented.

Educational Objectives

After my presentation, the participant will be able to describe the difference between the concepts of subjectivity and “subjectuality”, the link between organization and processes of our subjectivity and authenticity and to explain the role of authenticity in shaping our perception of ourself and our selfhood.



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PANEL/ PAPER SESSION III

#5: On the Subject of Subjectivity (continued)

Presenters: Alioscia Boschioli, PhD, ITALY and James Fosshage, PhD, USA

Discussant: Janine de Peyer, PhD, USA

Moderator: Patricia Harney, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Listening/Experiencing Perspectives and Analysts' Subjectivities: Controversies, Reassessments and Proposals, James L. Fosshage

As part of the epistemological transition from positivistic to relativistic science that had begun earlier in the twentieth century, Kohut attempted to update psychoanalytic thinking in formulating the empathic mode of observation. The purpose of this paper is to reassess, through a conceptual and historical lens, the considerable controversy generated by the empathic perspective. The author specifically addresses constructivist philosophical underpinnings, the use and impact of the analyst's subjectivity, the inclusion of unconscious processes, the need for additional listening perspectives to comprehend the complex analyst/analysand interaction, and the influence of theoretical models in the organization of clinical data. A clinical vignette is presented to illustrate the analyst's rapidly oscillating use of three listening perspectives.

Educational Objectives

1. To understand and explain the controversies and their origins concerning the empathic listening perspective.
2. To describe additional listening perspectives emergent within psychoanalysis at large.
3. To explain the usefulness of integrating the empathic, other-centered and analyst's self listening perspectives.



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#6: Where Truth Lies: Empathy and Surprise in Relational Process

Presenters: Linda Beeler, LCSW, USA and Paolo Stramba Badiale, PhD, ITALY

Discussant: Karen Starr, PsyD, USA

Moderator: Carmine Schettini, MD, ITALY

Abstract:

Mutual Discoveries Emerging Out of Secrets, Lies, Deceptions and Truths, Linda Beeler

The author illuminates the examined life and journey of both analysand and the analyst. This paper is a clinical journey and sets forth the analysand's history as it unfolded during the course of treatment. The clinical material describes the course of a six year treatment of a man with a rigid self-constricting way of life, and show the analyst's parallel shift toward more spontaneity and creativity. The compelling clinical work posed a challenge to the analyst, who ventured into the use of relational theory to help the analysand organize his expanding identity. The co-construction of the analytic dyad illuminates how the analysand and analyst mutually influence each other. The process of psychoanalytic treatment is explored through several interactions and enactments within the intersubjective field of the analytic dyad. Enactments, heightened affective moments, self and mutual regulation, moments of spontaneity, and exchanges within the analytic encounter promoted change within the analysand as well as analyst.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of this paper, the participants will be able to understand the bidirectional influence between analysand and analyst. They will be able to appreciate how the analysand has an impact and influence on the analyst, and be able to explain and illustrate how the analyst can use oneself as an object in the analytical space by using creativity and spontaneity within a relational context.

Listening to the Patient. Responsibility and Authenticity in the Analytic Treatment, Paolo Stramba Badiale

The paper addresses psychoanalytic listening as a space created by the analyst and patient together. The elements and features that make listening specifically psychoanalytic, hence respectful of the patient's deep-rooted and unique subjective organization, are pointed out. In particular, three variables are considered: the analyst's non-neutrality, empathy and authenticity, understood as aspects of the self experience of both participants in the analytic dialogue. These variables are discussed within the theoretical-clinical frameworks of the Relational Psychoanalysis, also as key concepts in the debate that is taking place in contemporary psychoanalysis regarding the specific nature of the requests and needs that emerge in the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, psychoanalytic listening is the result of the convergence of empathy, non-neutrality and authenticity, which are also understood as specific components of the therapeutic role and discipline. Within this framework, the implicit aspects of psychoanalytic relationality, intended as curative factors, are taken into consideration.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to improve the capacity to listen the patient in the analytic treatment; and explain the therapeutic role in the analytic treatment.



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#7: Relational Perspectives on Immigrant Subjectivity

Presenters: Ruth Lijtmaer, PhD, USA and Glenys Lobban, PhD, USA

Discussant: Cleonie White, PhD, USA

Moderator: Laura Molet Estaper, PsyD, SPAIN

Abstract:

How Stephen Mitchell's Legacy Influenced My Work as an Immigrant Analyst, Ruth Lijtmaer

This presentation will illustrate my psychoanalytic development as an immigrant analyst being initially trained in the classical tradition. I will describe particularly my struggles with the concepts of self-disclosure and neutrality; boundaries; transference and countertransference and language and bilingualism.

At the conclusion of my presentation the participants will: 1) Understand the influence of race, culture and ethnicity in the individual's life, particularly immigrants. 2) Recognize the significant role of the analyst's values and cultural countertransference in the interactions with the patient.

Immigrant Subjectivity: On Being a Bicultural Analyst in North America, Glenys Lobban

In this paper I offer a theoretical framework for conceptualizing the psychic experiences of immigrants to the United States. My specific focus is the subjectivity of the immigrant analyst and the ways in which this shapes her relationships with her patients. I am an immigrant analyst. I came to New York when I was 27 to study Clinical Psychology. When an enactment occurred with my American patient Rachel where I found myself actively siding with her immigrant boyfriend and trying to explain his motivations to her, it made me realize that I needed to examine how I felt about my own immigrant status. I borrow the concept of "double consciousness" from W.E.B. du Bois and review the experiences of immigrants to North America through this lens. I use my own experiences to illustrate how an immigrant arrives in North America with one set of selves, which are then overwritten and refracted by her experiences in her new culture, and all of this shapes her consciousness, subjectivity and sense of identity. The immigrant's experience is colored by the fact that American culture awards privileged status to those Americans who are born in North America, and who have parents who are American, White, and English speaking. Immigrants experience "double consciousness" when they judge themselves via the "American is best" lens, see themselves as "less than" Americans, and reject their foreign selves. When I examined the enactment that I participated in with my patient Rachel I realized I had my own unconscious "double consciousness". I identified with Rachel's foreign boyfriend and defended him because part of me felt like an "outsider" in America and I was speaking up that facet of myself. In spite of my aspirations to be a bicultural analyst I had developed a binary, bifurcated analyst self. With my American patients I tried to be an "insider" and I utilized a culture neutral, assimilated facet of myself. I showed a more spontaneous "outsider" self to my patients who were foreigners or immigrants. When I processed the enactment with my patient Rachel, this led to a resignification for each of us, where we redefined and expanded our self definition and experienced a new hybridity.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation the participant will be able to understand how "double consciousness" develops in immigrants to North America, the psychic toll that "double consciousness" takes on the immigrant and how the therapist can address this problem when she is treating immigrant patients; and understand the powerful role that social and cultural factors play in the development of subjectivity.



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#8: Creating voices/Creating Selves

Presenters: Hillary Grill, MSW, USA and Marko Pejovic, MS, SERBIA

Discussant: Ahuva Barkan, MA, ISRAEL

Moderator: Jill Choder-Goldman, LCSW, USA

Abstract:

Bob Dylan's Creative Selves: A Wild Analysis, Hilary Grill

Stephen Mitchell's legacy to psychoanalysis as it is thought about and practiced today is so rich that it is difficult to focus on one...or even two aspects of it. One aspect that calls out to me is the value he placed on all things creative—from creative approaches to theory, to the treatment situation, to the encouraging of patients to tap into their creativity, to the mind of the analyst. It takes a great and creative mind to be able to conjure the new viewpoints, ideas and theories that became the foundation of the Relational perspective in psychoanalysis. More broadly, in order to envision new dimensions of psychoanalysis, we analysts must operate creatively. Relationally, being inspired by others has creative resonance. I read Mitchell and am inspired. I listen to Bob Dylan and I'm inspired. Not necessarily to take a particular action—instead it is a feeling that I can do more, that I am open to more. Thus, the focus of my presentation will be a multi-layered exploration of creativity as told through a “wild analysis” of Bob Dylan. In conducting this faux analysis, I will conduct a study of a creative individual in order to understand creativity from a psychoanalytic perspective. At the same time I will be inspired by and incorporate many of Mitchell's thoughts and theories along with psychoanalytic thinkers such as Winnicott, Bromberg, Knafo, MacDougall and others. Another layer will address the importance of the analyst's own openness to creativity as I journey through the entirely creative venture of a fictional analysis of an artist. Understanding the development of a creative artist helps us to understand the ways in which we can nurture those parts of ourselves and our patients.

Educational objectives:

1. At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to explain that the dynamic analytic process is inherently creative, involving both analyst and patient in a reciprocal creative process.
2. At the conclusion of my presentation the participant will be able to describe the ways in which an individual's developmental history informs their creativity.



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#8: Creating voices/Creating Selves (continued)

Presenters: Hilary Grill, MSW, USA and Marko Pejovic, MS, SERBIA

Discussant: Ahuva Barkan, MA, ISRAEL

Moderator: Jill Choder-Goldman, LCSW, USA

Abstract:

Creativity in Psychotherapeutic Process (Or how Edward and Gaveston appeared), Marko Pejovic

This paper is a result of the need to articulate a product of relationship between two subjects in therapeutic work, when usual explanatory systems of psychoanalysis practice— transference, counter transference, working alliance - seem to be insufficient. Therapist can transcend standstill in therapeutic process by keeping his/her creative potentials alive. The right way is not to explain, but to re-create information, senses and emotions he/she gets in contact with the client. These senses and emotions are initially generated in form of mental image that becomes a medium through which our creative potential speaks. If the therapist is able to communicate this insight with the client, progress in client's understanding of her/him-self will surely happen, as well as possibility of experience integration. I believe that such reaction of therapist is creative act and that it represents strong support for therapeutic practice.

At the conclusion of my presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Make difference between infantile and more mature forms of creativity by it's function in human life;
2. Understand the importance of structure of mental images, that appear in therapeutic process;
3. Be familiar with the idea that real position of creativity in psychotherapy is between client and therapist.



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#9: The Costs of Relational Safety

Presenters: Zina Steinberg, EdD, USA and Tomas Wange, PhD, SWEDEN

Discussant: Kathy Bacon-Greenberg, PhD, USA

Moderator: Susan Greenberg, MSW, USA

Abstract:

Empty Arms and Secret Shame: Relational Trauma and the Fate of the Imagination, Zina Steinberg

Relational trauma takes a particular toll on imagination. Thinking becomes concrete and psychic chaos threatens. It can therefore be an act of adaptive survival to foreclose imagination. This paper investigates relational trauma in a neonatal intensive care unit and the pervasive power shame plays in such trauma, its role in dismantling thinking and rendering imagination treacherous. Case examples of individual, couple and group consultations are used to illustrate the particular force of shame and the often positive effect when it is spoken. And just as this symbolized awareness can provide a vital affective connection for the parent, I give an example of how it also does the same for me, the analytic consultant.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation, the conference participant will be more attuned to the role of shame in relational trauma as seen in an intense medical setting; and able to describe how profoundly imagination can be constricted in relational trauma, yet also learn how adaptive that may at times be.

Can Love Last? Some Relational Perspectives in Family Counseling Work, Tomas Wange

"Can Love Last? The Fate of Romance over Time" became the title of Stephen A. Mitchell's last book. Besides having a historical perspective and an insight in the importance of the human social context, Mitchell also had an interest in understanding things by integrating different disciplines and therapeutic schools.

Margaret Black introduces us to Mitchell's attitude to learning and knowledge: "Stephen assumes in his writing that the most powerful impact comes from the reader's deeply personal engagement in the process. He simply asks you to think things through with him, to puzzle over the paradoxical nature of the human experience of passionate connection." I'll try to follow this device in the presentation, based on my experience working as a family counsellor in the Swedish social welfare system, the last couples of years.

Educational Objectives:

1. Psychoanalysis and family therapy are rooted in quite different historical and social realities, and there has been a lot of tensions between these two disciplines. My presentation shows relational psychoanalysis compared to traditional psychoanalysis, has come closer to family therapy and counselling. After the presentation participants will be able to integrate these disciplines in a easier way.
2. Because of fast changes in our social ideology and postmodern culture, there are many different ways to live your life today. Intimate relationship also seems to be more difficult to sustain today. In the presentation some of these issues are discussed. After the presentation the participant will be able to better describe: how to construct a good relationship, what is robustness, and the contextual influence on our sexuality.



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**#10: The Relationality of Everyday Life:
The Unfinished Journey of Relational Psychoanalysis**

Presenter: Paul Wachtel, PhD, USA

Discussants: Maria Gilbert, MA, UK & Kenneth Frank, PhD, USA

Moderator: Michelle Sweet, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Building on the insights embodied in Stephen Mitchell's critique of the metaphor of the baby and the developmental tilt, this paper examines the ways that relational theory has continued in important respects to build on a model of infantile prototypes and examines the limitations of such an approach to relational theorizing. Theorizing about the mother-infant interaction and about the analytic relationship and the events in the consulting room has rather thoroughly incorporated the insights of Mitchell and other relational pioneers, but conceptualizations about daily life have been less thoroughly relational. This gap in relational theorizing has also impeded understanding of the importance of this vast swath of everyday living, relegating it to a realm in which the patient's psychological organization is reflected or enacted, but not appreciating its crucial role in whether proclivities laid down in early childhood are continued throughout life or later change or differentiate. Through probing of theory and clinical case illustrations, the paper attempts to carry forward more thoroughly an agenda implicit in Steve Mitchell's foundational writings and to link Mitchell's theorizing to a parallel theoretical arc arising out of examination of the relationship between the ideas and observations of psychoanalysts and those of therapists operating from other points of view.

Educational Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will have a better understanding of the concepts of the developmental tilt, the metaphor of the baby, and the excluded middle relational theorizing.
2. At the conclusion of the presentation, the participant will better understand the dynamics and importance of the interactions of everyday life and the ways they strengthen or modify the proclivities arising from the experiences of infancy and early childhood.



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PANEL/ PAPER SESSION III

#11: Can Love Last? Re-Imagining Love

Presenters: Sarah Hill, LCSW, USA and Farrell Silverberg, PhD, USA

Discussant: Neil Skolnick, PhD, USA

Moderator: Kyra Montague, MSW, USA

Abstract:

Malignant Merger and the Mutually Dissociated Dynamics of Sadomasochism, Sarah Hill

This paper identifies a clinical phenomenon, which the author calls malignant merger, defined as a kind of clinical force field, pulling patient and analyst into a mutually dissociated sadomasochistic dynamic, whereby both members lose contact with the full multiplicity of their own selves and of the other and become stuck in interlocking defense. The author is specifically interested in the countertransference problem of how the analyst loses hold of a symbolic space internally as she struggles to separate herself from her patient's concrete and non-symbolic negative transferences. Building on Balint's work on benign vs. malignant regression, the author is interested in distinguishing between generative vs. destructive forms of merger. The author challenges the collective superego in the psychoanalytic field around the analyst's omnipotent survival of the patient's destructiveness and argues that there is not proper attention paid in analytic training or in the literature to the analyst's management of her own personal limits and boundaries, which contributes to malignant mergers. The author explores creative ways in which the analyst might navigate the dyad through a malignant merger and focuses on the development of the analyst's relationship to her own separate presence, psychically as well as somatically; certain bodywork modalities are described which support the process of embodied presence.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify the clinical phenomenon of malignant merger in his/her psychoanalytic practice.
2. Consider contributing factors to malignant mergers, both theoretical and personal, and explore methods of working with such clinical impasses.
3. Ideally experience a decrease in shame around personal limits and professional experiences of treatment "failures."



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#11: Can Love Last? Re-Imagining Love

Presenters: Sarah Hill, LCSW, USA and Farrell Silverberg, PhD, USA

Discussant: Neil Skolnick, PhD, USA

Moderator: Kyra Montague, MSW, USA (*tentative*)

Abstract:

Love's Life-Cycle: A Relational Treatise, Farrell Silverberg

Romantic love—love in the wild—has a life, beyond the life of the individuals within it. The life of a love relationship is an intersubjective one, is co-constructed by its two originators in an in-between dimension (reminiscent of the ancient Tibetan concept of a bardo), and is fragile and fleeting in form. Departing from descriptions based on contained models of the mind, this model extends the intersubjective and relational bounds of the concept to include a more transcendent aspect. The shared co-construction of love has a life-cycle of its own, and is posited to exist in a space-time dimension that is accessible in the “now”—and is not just a memory of past jouissance. As Stephen Mitchell (2002) stated, “Romantic love became almost paradigmatic of the transcendent experience; it was at once both erotic and sacred” (p. 39). Love’s co-construction brings down the walls between the conscious subjective, the unconscious, and the universal unconscious. Freud and Kristeva may be overstepping when they tell us that love can only stem from a self-mirroring way of relating, and when we acknowledge Eastern philosophies, it transforms the meaning of seeing yourself in another into a higher and more transcendent rather than infantile relation to love.

Educational Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant will be able to describe and explain a model of romantic love that is based on a relational co-construction in the “now,” formed of the colliding between two originator subjectivities rather than based on a search for past jouissance.
2. At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant will be able to illustrate, utilize new metaphors for, and, should he or she so wish, apply a more Eastern philosophical notion of a more transcendent dimension to the understanding of romantic love “in the wild” that can inform clinical work in issues of love and loss.