



IARPP 10th Anniversary Conference

THE LEGACY OF STEPHEN MITCHELL

Sustaining Creativity in Our Psychoanalytic Work

Saturday, March 3rd 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#1: Depicting Dissociation: Multiple Self-States in Multi-Media

Presenters: Margaret Dieter, LCSW, USA and Sheldon Itzkowitz, PhD, USA

Discussant: Elizabeth Howell, PhD, USA

Moderator: Eric Sherman, MSW, USA

Abstract:

Trauma, Dissociation and Transformation in Jane Campion's Film, "The Piano," Margaret Dieter

The concept of dissociation has been increasingly embraced by clinicians because of its usefulness in understanding and engaging people who have experienced trauma, opening up discussions of multiple self states, the usefulness of enactments and the importance of deep personal engagement. The psychologically insightful and compelling film, *The Piano*, by Jane Campion (1991), deepens this inquiry by illuminating the links between trauma, dissociation and transformation while allowing the complexity of the therapeutic challenge to be held in the confined space and time of the film's frame. Using the film, I will focus on the ways that trauma organizes, structures, and disrupts mental life through the mechanism of dissociation in three main characters. I will then show how a particular kind of interpersonal relationship can help to transform that experience for each of the characters. Implications for clinical practice that can be drawn from this analysis will be considered at the end.

Educational Objectives:

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

1. Describe and illustrate the way that dissociation works as an adaptive response of the mind to trauma
2. Describe and illustrate the way in which a relationship in which one person's ability to give the self over to the other person's reality can overcome the rigidity of pathological dissociation so that pain and loss can be tolerated and intrapsychic conflict experienced.

Good Girls Don't Get Angry: Dissociated Self-States Cope With Forbidden Affect, Sheldon Itzkowitz

Participants will have the opportunity to view 2 video clips that display Dr. Shelly Itzkowitz working with dissociated self-states in a patient diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder. The audience will see how anger and aggression, previously forbidden affect, is permitted into awareness within the safety of the analytic relationship. Humor, spontaneity and enactments, afford self-states to engage feelings between the different states and in the transference. Dr. Elizabeth Howell will be discussing the video clips.

Educational Objectives

At the end of my presentation participants will be able to recognize and explain what self-states are and what functions they can serve for individuals; and understand and explain how dissociated affect is compartmentalized in the mind and how to engage such material.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

**#2: Mania, Narcissism, & Charisma:
The Good, The Bad and Its Impact on the Analyst**

Presenters: Christopher Bonovitz, PsyD, USA and Irwin Hirsch, PhD, USA

Discussant: Andrew Harlem, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Narcissism, Mania, and the Analyst's Envy, Irwin Hirsch

The Power of Charisma: Lies, Guilt, and Collusion, Christopher Bonovitz

In the spirit of Stephen Mitchell's invaluable contributions to psychoanalysis, this panel will honor his effort to deconstruct the analytic hierarchy and to question the historical emphasis on the pathology of the patient in contrast to the "morally superior and healthier" analyst. Through his writing and teaching, Mitchell brings forth a model of the analytic relationship as one between two flawed and thoroughly subjective co-participants. This panel will also highlight his successful attempt to bridge the intrapsychic and interpersonal realms of experience through the integration of object relations theories and interpersonal theory, and his keen ability to articulate the nuances of the analytic interaction in which the analyst inevitably becomes ensnared in the patient's relational configurations.

The first paper in this panel will draw on pop culture (television show, 'Mad Men') and the analysis of a powerful, successful male patient in tackling the historical assumptions about mania that tend to pathologize and infantilize patients. This paper examines the analyst's envy in relation to such patients that may manifest as a morally superior attitude in the analyst, an attitude that ignores the patient's strengths and the analyst's flaws.

The second paper will explore the psychology of charisma in certain patients, speculating about its origins and how the charismatic patient subtly seduces the analyst. This paper looks at the self-destructive tendencies (including lies and deceit) that often accompany charisma, and the collusions that took hold in a complicated analysis of a charming, witty young patient.

Educational Objectives

1. To understand the diagnostic and character features of mania and narcissism.
2. To explain how the analysis of countertransference helps with treating manic, narcissistic patients.



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**#3: Mourning, Destruction & Reparation:
Creativity & Psychic Growth in Analytic Process**

Presenters: Amy Schwartz Cooney, PhD, USA and Lauren Levine, PhD, USA

Discussant: Steven Cooper, PhD, USA

Moderator: Ann Baranowski, PhD, CANADA

Abstract:

Repetition, Reparation, Mourning and Generativity: The Psychic Replacement Child, Amy Schwartz Cooney

The Interweaving of Mourning, Destruction & Creativity in Psychoanalytic Realms, Lauren Levine

This panel will explore the interweaving of mourning, destruction, reparation, and the creation of the new in psychoanalysis. The first paper illustrates how the capacity to manage destructiveness and mourning is an aspect of creativity emerging through the analytic process. According to Bion (1970), change is a moment of catastrophe, and wrestling with catastrophic change is a fundamental aspect of psychic growth. Ogden (2000) asserts that mourning “centrally involves a demand that we make on ourselves to create something—whether it be a memory, a dream, a story, a poem, a response to a poem... (p. 65),” while Harris (2005) suggests that “melancholy is also the site of imagination, fantasy, and passion (p. 262).” Through the analytic process, the two patients in this paper slowly evolved from being haunted by their traumatized pasts to “dreaming themselves into existence” (Ogden, 2009). In the second paper the topic of mourning, reparation and the creation of the new is taken up again. The work of Klein (1975), Fairbairn (1952), Loewald (1960), Mitchell (1993), and Searles (1979) are particularly relevant. The treatment of a woman who has delivered a full term stillborn daughter is presented. She is struggling to loosen her ties to this baby (and all that she represents) and grieve so she can create the space to produce a new life, rather than engender a replacement child. This paper focuses on the tensions between loyalty toward the old and dead and commitment to the new and emergent. The role of hope for a progressive future will be explored considering the distinction between reparative/restitutive work and the creation/discovery of the new. Both papers resonate with Mitchell’s vision of psychoanalysis as a dynamic, vibrant process in which patient and analyst engage, sometimes with hope, sometimes in despair, ultimately with an eye on growth and the creation of new meanings and ways of being. Our discussant, whose writing has focused on the interaction of old and new and the place of the psychic future in the analytic relationship, will reflect on these papers from his own unique perspective.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of our presentation, the participant will be able to describe how managing destructiveness and mourning is an aspect of creativity that emerges through the analytic process; and integrate various theoretical ideas about the relationship between mourning and creativity in psychoanalysis, with particular emphasis on considering the interplay of reparative/restitutive and creative/expansive processes in the analytic relationship.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#4: Considering Closeness and Distance in the Analytic Process

Presenters: Judi Kobrick, PhD, CANADA, Koichi Togashi, PhD, JAPAN and
Amanda Kottler, MA, SOUTH AFRICA

Discussant: Larry Zelnick, PsyD, USA

Moderator: Alexis Mordoh, PsyD, GREECE

Abstract:

A Failure of Imagination: Trapped Between Fear and Desire, Judi Kobrick

Stephen Mitchell's evocative words continue to profoundly transform, enrich and unlock the ambiguous, multifaceted and yet to be discovered nuances of the relational perspective sustaining creativity in our psychoanalytic work. In 1993 he wrote:

“... psychopathology might well be considered a failure of imagination, a life that is stuck because old constraints foreclose the possibility of new experiences, new states of the mind.” (Hope and Dread, p.222)

New possibilities for experience and the analytic relationship can become trapped in repeated enactments of the familiar given the fear of venturing into the unknown, both for the patient and the analyst. Mitchell (1988) reminds us that the “adhesive devotion to the relational matrix” and the “deep loyalty to the familiar” is inexorably tied to the terror of losing oneself and sense of connection with others. The fear and desire for “imaginative reshaping” transported me back in time evoking the affective storms and tensions of an analytic treatment that has never left the recesses of my mind. There standing before me was the apparition of Christian proclaiming his “hubris” and “misogyny”, that he has trapped himself and I am there with him. Christian was 28 years old when he began an analysis that traversed the battlefields of his past searching for something new in something old.

Educational Objectives

1. Participants will gain knowledge of relational psychoanalysis and its application to clinical material.
2. Participants will gain knowledge of the clinical implications of complex facets of enactment in the relational matrix.



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#4: Considering Closeness and Distance in the Analytic Process (continued)

Presenters: Judi Kobrick, PhD, CANADA, Koichi Togashi, PhD, JAPAN and
Amanda Kottler, MA, SOUTH AFRICA

Discussant: Larry Zelnick, PsyD, USA

Moderator: Alexis Mordoh, PsyD, GREECE

Abstract:

"I Am Afraid of Seeing Your Face:" Trauma & the Dread of Engaging in a Twinship Tie,
Koichi Togashi and Amanda Kottler

In this paper, from a contemporary self psychological perspective, the authors develop the idea of a correlation between twinship and trauma. They focus on dynamic systems in which traumatized individuals, having sought out others with whom they can share similar traumatic experiences, paradoxically, avoid acknowledging that these others are able to recognize similarities between them. With reference to a case vignette of a Japanese male who had been physically abused by his mother the authors illustrate how this plays out in the analytic dyad and the complexities involved in this process. As the analyst finds similarities between them the patient immediately expects that the differences between his analyst and himself will not be recognized or acknowledged. With this comes a dread that, if the patient does not immediately withdraw from the relationship, the analyst, to whom he has exposed the most vulnerable part of his subjectivity, will colonize his pain and suffering. The authors conclude that it is possible to keep this dynamic system open to transformation if the analyst focuses on the dynamic system's rigidity and the delicate balance between the patient's capacity to be closed or open to recognizing the multiplicity of an essentially curative twinship experience.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of the presentation, from a contemporary self psychological perspective, participants will have a better conceptual grasp of the correlation between trauma and a twinship experience. They will have a greater understanding of the complex nature of the dynamic system, and the need for the analyst to be exquisitely sensitive to the traumatized patient's deep and intense longing for, but equally deep dread of an experience which allows for the mutual recognition of similarities and differences in the dyad.



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#5: Culture and Conceptualization: Imbeddedness

Presenters: Guler Fisek, PhD, TURKEY and Maria Pia Roggero Kluzer, PhD, ITALY

Discussant: Juan Francisco Jordan Moore, MD, CHILE

Moderator: Linda Hujanir, PhD, USA

Abstract:

When Daedalus fails Icarus: Male Narcissism in a Culture that Glorifies Masculinity, Fisek Guler

This paper takes its inspiration from Mitchell's 1988 chapter titled "The Wings of Icarus". There Mitchell uses the example of Icarus to describe narcissistic illusion as a learned way of human connection, that is, relationality. This presentation explores Mitchell's ideas on narcissism within a cultural context, in an attempt to show how cultural values buttress parental "overvaluing" (1988, p, 180) resulting in a grandiose approach to life and relationships, that inevitably leads to relational difficulties. The focus will be on male experience in the Turkish context where grandiose narcissistic phenomena reflect more or less normative male experience. A discussion of the contributions of culture to the development of male narcissism will be given. This will be followed by a composite case example, showing how the addition of particular combinations of individual attributes and family dynamics to this context can lead to illusory developments that end in grief.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to see an example of how Mitchell's ideas offer new possibilities for understanding personality disorders; and develop further understanding of the role of culture in the development of personality disorders.

Sophie's Return, Maria Pia Roggero Klutzer

In this work I will use Sophie's case, drawn from Stephen A. Mitchell's *Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis* (1993), to bring into focus how the *Psychoanalysis of Relation in Italy* (*Psicoanalisi della Relazione*), developed at about the same time but independently of *Relational Psychoanalysis* in the US. Since then, frequent and constructive exchanges have been going on between the two models which I will outline. The *Psychoanalysis of Relation in Italy* differs in several theoretical ways including: a) the notion of subject and b) the notion of psychopathology. These concepts are deeply interrelated. I will examine them by answering the three questions asked by Mitchell in the above-mentioned book: 1) "What does Sophie need?" 2) "What does the analyst know?" Finally 3) "Where does the Analyst's knowledge of the patient come from?"

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

1. The differences and the common points between *Relational Psychoanalysis* and *Psicoanalisi della Relazione* regarding the concept of subject and the concept of psychopathology.
2. The therapeutic effects of this different conceptualization of the subject.



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#6: Thinking About Affect

Presenters: Catherine Hicks, MA, AUSTRALIA and Peter Shabad, PhD, USA

Discussant: Carolyn Clement, PhD, USA

Moderator: Roger Segalla, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Guilt and Self-Pity: A Typology of Nostalgia, Catherine Hicks

In this paper, I am proposing that, in their less healthy manifestations, some kinds of nostalgia are like Mitchell's concept of 'guiltiness', and others are like 'pitifulness' – and in each case, they permit a retreat from genuine experience of self, other and the reality of suffering. Although I see nostalgia functioning also as a beneficial mechanism, it is primarily this dimension that I'm trying to think about in this paper – nostalgia as retreat, as defense, in which the nostalgia may indicate how much a person is able to bear of diverse and conflict-inducing versions of the past, as viewed from the present vantage point. Building on Mitchell's conceptualization, and integrating it with Margalit's (2011) suggestions about good and bad types of nostalgia, I propose a typology of nostalgia, and within this, pay particular attention to a more extreme form – allied to Kammen's description of nostalgia as "history without guilt" (1991), especially as it manifests in those of us who have been part of a repugnant racist past.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy forms and functions of nostalgia; and understand how some forms of nostalgia disable the capacity to bear guilt and complicity.

Licking One's Own Wounds: Suffering and Cycles of Shame and Self-Pity, Peter Shabad

Patients and analysts frequently become locked in enactments generated by their reciprocal dissociations. Emerging from this quagmire often entails the capacity of the dyad to confront each other and negotiate out of these impasses. When discussing the analyst's role in facing her own dissociations much of the analytic literature refers to minor omissions or blind spots that are effectively dealt with by slight attitude adjustments toward the patient. I suggest that, in some instances, the therapist's willingness to grapple with her deeper and more profound detachments while struggling and negotiating with her patient's dissociations could lead to intense mutual influence and spirited enlivening collaboration between the two, including invitations to participate in architecting the therapy itself. This thoroughgoing relational process could be further advanced by broadening the analytic frame to include external environmental factors. A detailed case vignette is presented.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of my presentation the participant will be able to illustrate the advantage of embracing a more comprehensive relational and environmental approach to therapeutic action. There are two educational objectives in this: (1) The therapist's willingness to grapple with her deeper and more profound detachments while struggling and negotiating with her patient's dissociations could lead to intense mutual influence and spirited enlivening collaboration between the two, including and especially invitations to participate in architecting the therapy itself. (2) This thoroughgoing relational process could be further advanced by broadening the analytic frame to include external environmental factors.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#7: Relational Approaches to Parenting Interventions

Presenters: Susan Kraemer, PhD, USA; Andreja Poljanec & Barbara Simonc, PhD, SLOVENIA

Discussant: Dori Sorter, PhD, USA

Moderator: Elizabeth Allured, PsyD, USA

Abstract:

Imaginations at the Threshold: Psychoanalytic Consultation in Newborn Intensive Care, Susan Kraemer

In “Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis” Steven Mitchell proposed that a patient who is suffering from a “failure in imagination” may be helped through her relationship with the analyst to “envision other ways of being and being with.” True to the spirit of the relational turn, Mitchell pointed out that the analyst’s imaginative capacities are also at play, as is the analyst’s “personal stake” in the process. I consider these ideas within the context of my work as psychoanalytic consultant in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU), an environment in which imagination can feel treacherous and hope and dread live in uneasy relation. Here, mothers’ minds are places where ghosts and aliens hang about and destructive fantasies may be realized. In an effort to make sense of my experience of feeling like a “trespasser” in the NICU I explore the critical link between failures in imagination and failures in empathy within the analyst and the inherent shame that can accompany these states of mind. I describe how I come to “re-imagine” the ways in which my own narratives of birth and death inevitably shape my listening and how this has enabled me to appreciate the relational and reciprocal tensions inherent in these “failures.” In particular I develop my understanding of how shame and imagination in the NICU are intermingled with fears of trespassing onto maternal states of mind and are impacted by the mothers’ own mix of fear, guilt, and shame, as well as history of perinatal loss. Through vignettes I describe how I come to know that holding back from imaginative engagement is sometimes a form of destructiveness, and sometimes, an expression of care.

Educational Objectives:

Participants will have a unique opportunity to consider the complexity of psychoanalytic consultation in an intensive medical setting. At the conclusion of my presentation the listener will have been helped to:

1. Think more deeply about the ways in which the analyst is impacted by those with whom she works, and will be able to use these clinical vignettes as a means of understanding the ways in which the analyst is embedded in the analytic process and how this in turn impacts the patient and the work (Mitchell, Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis, 1993).
2. Will be provided with experientially near examples that elaborate Stephen Mitchell’s commitment to thinking about dialectic tension and paradox as inherent to clinical theory and practice.



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#7: Relational Approaches to Parenting Interventions (continued)

Presenters: Susan Kraemer, PhD, USA; Andreja Poljanec & Barbara Simonc, PhD,
SLOVENIA

Discussant: Dori Sorter, PhD, USA

Moderator: Elizabeth Allured, PsyD, USA

Abstract:

Building Motherhood, Andreja Poljanec and Barbara Simonc

The commitment and physical and emotional availability of parents will from the day their child is born determine the breadth and depth of the child's social and relational world; after all, this primary relationship undermines how the newborn will develop. The first three years of the child's life are fundamental for the development of the child's brain. As the brain is not yet a fully formed organ at birth, it develops and grows in response to the spontaneous relationships experienced within the environment. Experiences from the early formative years of the child's life are the most consequential. The child's primary relationship, especially with the mother, thus provides the basis for how the circuitry for emotional processing will draw up in the child's brain; this circuitry will also determine the individual's greater or lesser capacity to enter into emotional relationships later in life. This is the essence of why it is crucial for the mother and child to be able to mutually co-create the kind of connection that will allow this. In this contribution, we will look into the fields recognized by mothers attending a young mother's group as vital to co-creating a happy and fulfilling motherhood.

Educational Objectives

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

1. Understand the process of building a maternity and its meaning for healthy child development;
2. Identify the essential elements of successful motherhood.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#8: Idealization and Devaluation in the Therapeutic Relationship

Presenters: Ingrid Pedroni, PhD, ITALY and Sandra Salerno, LCW, USA

Discussant: Estelle Shane, PhD, USA

Moderator: Joye Weisel-Barth, PhD, PsyD , USA

Abstract:

Dealing with Emerging Creativity Between Grandiose Illusion and Catastrophic Failure, Ingrid Pedroni

The report of the treatment of a talented young woman with severe problems of self-regulation in bodily and relational terms, highlights how clinical paradigms of self psychology and relational psychoanalysis are necessary to respond to different stages of the analytic process. In the first years of the analysis a soothing, protecting and silently mirroring attitude led to a condition of increased well being, while an interpretative effort meant to underline the systemic nature of disruptive interactions in the family helped in the acquisition of a deeper and more mature self-other representation. But a similar analytic stance became ineffectual when the patient's new needs and different state of self caused a relevant change in the therapeutic relation signalled by the analyst's countertransferential reaction. If these new and unexpected countertransferential reactions are not taken into account and understood as the surfacing of conflicting new and old self-states, listening and mirroring is deprived of its authentic, empathic significance. The casting aside of the interpersonal dimension led to an impasse, which resulted in a radical, but resolute enactment. Mitchell's theoretical and clinical suggestions are considered in delineating possible alternative paths that may have avoided the impasse.

Educational Objectives

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

1. How effective a mirroring and holding analytic stance can be in cases of severe disturbances in self- and self-other regulation.
2. Why the same attitude may lead to an impasse and to unexpected enactments, when in a new stage of the process interpersonal dimensions and a different countertransferential experience of the patient are not taken into account and how essential is, therefore, the theoretical and clinical teaching of Mitchell in envisaging a different outcome.



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#8: Idealization and Devaluation in the Therapeutic Relationship (continued)

Presenters: Ingrid Pedroni, PhD, ITALY and Sandra Salerno, LCW, USA

Discussant: Estelle Shane, PhD, USA

Moderator: Joye Weisel-Barth, PhD, PsyD , USA

Abstract:

Oh No! Who Are You? Struggling with the Analyst's Loss of the Idealized Patient, Sandra Salerno

This paper picks up a strand of thought first explored by Stephen Mitchell in *Influence and Autonomy*, that of the conflicting desires of the analysts to help patients locate and express their individual personhood and to shape them in the form of the analyst's vision of a psychologically, emotionally and socially healthy individual. Questions are raised regarding the values that underlie such visions. Also, the vision that the analyst creates of the patient is explored in an expansion of the concept of the idealized patient, a mosaic created through each interaction and laid down to create in the analyst's mind's eye a picture of who the patient is. When the analyst's vision of the idealized patient is challenged, and the mosaic falls apart, the analyst is left to pick up the pieces emotionally and clinically. This paper will illustrate such an occurrence through two case examples, one historic and one derived from the author's clinical experience.

Educational Objectives

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

1. Explain the potential danger in the idealization of the patient.
2. Describe how he or she may be influenced by personal, social and psychoanalytic values to react in the event of the loss of the idealized patient.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#9: Truth and Consequences: Reality as a Relational Construction

Presenters: Arthur Gray, PhD, USA and Michael Pariser, PsyD, USA

Discussant: Susan Warshaw, EdD, USA

Moderator: Deborah Birnbaum, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Living Truthfully Under Imaginary Circumstances: The Impact of Affective Improvisation in Psychoanalysis, Arthur Gray

Improvisation in psychoanalysis has heretofore been defined by a theater games model in which the emphasis is on a creative exchange of dialogue. In this paper, I expand the concept of improvisation by drawing on the contributions of Sanford Meisner. His model is characterized by two improvisers maintaining affective contact. He described this process as “living truthfully under imaginary circumstances.” Clinical case material illustrates how Meisner’s model of affective improvisation can be applied to circumstances in which the analyst is pushed beyond familiar analytic comfort zones. In such situations, affective improvisations provide the analyst with an additional resource with which to respond to these challenging moments in ways that facilitate increasing intimacy between patient and analyst. I spell out how affective improvisations impact therapeutic action in psychoanalysis.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participants will learn what affective improvisations are; and learn to recognize how affective improvisations can be relied on to engage complex challenging moments that occur in an analysis.

Postcards from Hell: The Act of Creation as a Relational Process, Michael Pariser

In the midst of a two-and-a-half year analysis marked by an intense romanticized transference, the therapist was facing the all-too-common problem of frequent extra-session communication. Voice mail messages, text messages, and emails from the patient detailed the emotional horrors she suffered as a result of the analyst's refusal to allow the relationship to become more personal, and the analyst found himself growing increasingly resentful and disconnected. Then, noting the patient's dissociative process at work and wishing to bridge her discontinuous worlds of experience, he came up with the idea of playing the patient's voice messages back to her in session. After initial resistance on the part of the patient and clumsiness by the analyst, they were eventually able to use the process to stand more in the spaces between the patient's dissociated self-states. At that point, progress, which had stalled, began again to move forward. In the process, the analyst began to reconnect better to his own disconnected emotional experiences in relation to the patient. This creative act is illuminated as a psychoanalytic process that may have utility for other analysts in this age of electronic communication, and the creative process that produced it is examined as a profoundly relational process involving the therapist, the patient, and the therapist's growing range of contemporary theoretical influences.

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

1. Identify those situations in which it might be useful to play a patient’s voice mail messages in session.
2. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of doing so.
3. Explain the relational elements that constitute the creative process.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#10: Holding Horror: Dialectical Tensions in Working with Trauma

Presenters: Lisa Lyons, PhD, USA and Shaily Wardimon, MSW, ISRAEL

Interlocutor: Tessa Philips, PhD, AUSTRALIA

Moderator: Sophia Richman, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Analytic Knowing: Holding Horror & Working Towards Change, Lisa Lyons

Relational psychoanalytic literature is filled with discussion regarding how the concept of intersubjectivity has enhanced the space between and within patients and analysts. As the relationship between the dyad expands and contracts, prior traumatic experiences become ripe for reenactment. Several theorists have posited that there is a fluidity between the positions of persecuted, persecutor, and bystander/rescuer. Patients who have been abused may be more likely to project sedimented aspects of this trauma into the analyst. Unconscious motivations may include gaining a sense of empowerment, disavowing feelings of shame and inferiority, or mastering feelings of abandonment or misattunement experienced by a Third who either stood by or was unable to rescue the patient from being abused. Traditionally understood as "identification with the aggressor," a relational view of this pattern understands the implicit relational knowledge that becomes activated when placed in a situation reminiscent of prior experiences of abuse. The vicissitudes of each particular therapy dyad are complex in such cases, but what happens when the analyst is a trainee and the supervisor reenacts the abuse experienced by the patient onto the trainee? Can the analyst/trainee withstand such "identification with the oppressed?" When the enactment extends beyond the dyad and moves into the triad, how can the trainee/analyst move beyond her own feelings of persecution, using this shared experience to create agency for both herself and the patient? As a trainee, she is particularly vulnerable to devaluation, criticism, and being placed in the position of "Other" in terms of her lesser status in the training environment. In my case illustration, the setting was an art institute's counseling center, and the patient a sculptor. Bullying and sadism were projected into the analyst/trainee so that she could share the patient's shame and anger. Resultantly, this regression to a shared intersubjective space of juvenile bullying led the trainee to take risks in the treatment, enraging her supervisor for "breaking the frame." Feeling bullied by both patient and supervisor led the trainee to further enter the subjugated space of the patient, ultimately empowering both to "sculpt" a relationship that moved them out of such constricted roles.

Educational Objectives:

At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant will be able to describe the ways in which early traumatic experiences may be reenacted within the treatment dyad. Specifically, participants will develop a greater understanding of the sequelae of early childhood sexual abuse on the relational matrix within the dyad.

Also, the participant will be able to explain how as a trainee, a supervisee may be hierarchically placed in a subjugated role while training. Therefore, she may experience a greater susceptibility to enacting with the patient the dynamics of perpetrator/victim/rescuer-bystander that often is at the relational core of abuse survivors.



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PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

**#10: Holding Horror: Dialectical Tensions in Working with Trauma
(continued)**

Presenters: Lisa Lyons, PhD, USA and Shaily Wardimon, MSW, ISRAEL

Interlocutor: Tessa Philips, PhD, AUSTRALIA

Moderator: Sophia Richman, PhD, USA

Abstract:

"Touching the Tar Baby:" On The Dialectic Interplay of Dissociation & Imagination, Shaily Wardimon

This paper will present the case of Lea, a Holocaust survivor coming to therapy for the first time in her life. The general lines along which the treatment went so far will be described, portraying the unique dynamics of severe past trauma, old age and structural dissociation. After discussing the ways in which this clinical material invokes Donnel Stern and Philip Bromberg's separate, but similar, conceptualizations of dissociation and its relation to a failure of imagination, I will attempt to show, following vignettes from the work with Lea, that dissociation and imagination can sometime maintain a dialectic relationship, without necessarily negating each other. Using a dialectic line of thought which finds its inspiration in Stephen Mitchell's conceptualization of the dialectics of hope and the role of imagination, the apparent contradictory qualities of imagination and dissociation will be shown as coming together in certain circumstances to form an intricate relational reality, which needs to be held by therapist and patient, so as not to collapse back to an either-or way of thinking.

Educational Objectives

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

1. Describe the dialectics of dissociation and imagination, understanding that despite their appearance as two opposing forces that negate each other, they sometimes must operate simultaneously, creating a very intricate relational reality that needs to be contained without a collapse into an either-or way of thinking.
2. Feel more familiar with the unique charecteristics of working with Holocaust survivors today, struggling with the complex interlock of old age and PTSD.



Saturday, March 3rd

PAPER/PANEL SESSION V

#11: The Analyst Engages Creative Writing and Memoir

Presenters: Ann D'Ercole, PhD, USA and Colette Rayment, PhD, AUSTRALIA

Discussant: Bonnie Zindel, PhD, USA

Moderator: Sally Donaldson, PhD, USA

Abstract:

Memoir Writing and Analytic Work: The Analytic Witness, Ann D'Ecole

Noting a dearth of writers from the Italian-American community and of scholars interested in that experience, the author discusses the self-integration process of writing a memoir about growing up Italian-American in Post WWII America. The author explores the role of witness in telling ones story.

Educational Objectives:

At the conclusion of my presentation the participants will be able to describe some of the psychological challenges of the Italian American experience in Post WWII America and their generalizability to other immigrant groups; and illustrate how memoir writing provides a potential for sustaining creativity in psychoanalytic work.

Relationally and Creatively, Colette Rayment

Last year I left the San Francisco IARPP Conference and my newfound American colleague and returned to Sydney, primed to write in the creative genre of life writing. The work flourished through that autumn until it was interrupted in the winter by a desire to write a more academic paper for a Congress in Sydney on World Dreaming. All this while by Skype, my American colleague held the creative project up to my mind, showing her interest in what I might have to say on Aboriginal art and trauma, but never letting me forget the creative venture. Striding both projects through the winter, I realised that the paper on Aboriginal art and Dreaming and my life writing were two arms of one enterprise: both projects were talking about the same thing: an engagement with creativity (art and writing respectively) as vehicle for, and metaphor for, the integration of trauma. This proposed presentation is a reading from some of that writing.

Educational Objectives:

At the conclusion of my paper together with that of my panel colleague, the participant will further appreciate the power of the unconscious in the creative writing process. The enterprise of writing creatively will be understood as a relational interplay between conscious and unconscious enterprises, between academic and literary projects and between 'mentor' and writer.

Additionally the participant will be able to recall certain images of various indigenous art works to trope concepts of unintegrated and integrated trauma and to forge her/his own creative visuals for these concepts.