



Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Plenary Session I

## **American Dream?: The Diversity, Creativity and Calamity of Los Angeles**

Presenters: Estelle Shane, PhD, USA; Glen Gabbard, MD, USA and Ilene Philipson, PhD, PsyD, USA

Interlocutor & Moderator: Christina Emanuel, MFT, PsyD, USA

### Abstract:

Throughout most of the 20th century Los Angeles has stood for and largely embodied the American Dream: endless sunshine, home ownership, reinvention, starting anew. Unlinked from tradition and the confines of historical remembrance, new forms of art, culture, and lifestyle emerged from its seemingly endless landscape. It is in this context that psychoanalysis bloomed as it welcomed emigre analysts from the American east coast and Europe and placed its stamp on Hollywood forever.

Today that Dream endures but with its underside revealed: vast income inequality, homelessness, drought and catastrophic fires. It is in this complex, dynamic context that our opening panel will explore Los Angeles' contribution to the history of psychoanalysis, the interpenetration of Hollywood and psychoanalysis, and the experience of practicing as a therapist in the context of great diversity, creativity, and calamity.

### Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this plenary, attendees will be able to:

1. Describe the ways in which Los Angeles became a locus of both psychoanalytic innovation and conservatism as it accepted emigre analysts from the American east coast and Europe.
2. Explain how psychoanalysis and Hollywood cinema mutually influenced each other over the course of the 20th century.
3. Discuss how Los Angeles serves as a model of contemporary contradictions in American life.



Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Plenary Session II

### **Three Characters in Search of a Story Empathy as a Complex Relational Achievement**

Presenters: Hazel Ipp, PhD, Canada and Malcolm Owen Slavin, PhD, USA  
Interlocutor & Moderator: Francesco Andreucci, PhD, Italy

Abstract:

We share multiple realms of experience with our patients. Very often, what feels real—what we both deeply trust—emerges through a process of probing and negotiating the universal, human existential challenges around otherness and loss that we inevitably share with our patients. Hazel Ipp and Malcolm Slavin will basically try to show this—*show it* as it developed over time in an ongoing therapeutic relationship. Their story will revolve around Mal’s treatment of his patient, Adam. We’ll hear Hazel re-narrating how Mal and Adam communicate—how they try to connect and make meaning. Mal resumes his story. Hazel continues to comment. Back and forth, we hear the story develop. What emerges is what Hazel and Mal come to see as a complex a form of empathy: A valued empathy that, however, is neither a “stance,” nor a learned “technique.” Rather, through an “adaptive probing” of what is hidden, conflicted and multiple in the other, a kind of complex empathy emerges over time in this relational context. Eventually Adam, Mal’s patient, reads and responds to the story as Mal tells it. He reflects and directly speaks to us through his written commentary on Mal’s story of their years of therapy. As he brings us inside his inner dialogue we hear his subjective experience of the empathic process that Hazel and Mal have come to understand and to call a *complex, relational achievement*.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Learn how empathy can be a “complex, relational achievement.”
2. Be able to identify how “adaptive probing” works in the process of building trust.
3. Learn how patients may change and develop internally without putting significant parts of their experience into words.



Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Plenary Session III

## Mimetic Understanding: The Embodied Dance of Words and Actions

Presenters: Susanna Federici, PhD, Italy and Gianni Nebbiosi, PhD, Italy  
Interlocutor & Moderator: Elizabeth Harvey, PhD, Canada

### Abstract:

The panel focuses on the study of *Mimesis* and the use of the method of miming the patient after the session, with the goal of becoming more and more intimate with body language of a patient and its effects on the analyst body. When this embodied intimacy is reached, a different dance of words and actions can be achieved. Psychoanalysis has often neglected this embodied intimacy or described it through a conceptual apparatus that destroys its ongoing experiential characteristics. Special attention is dedicated to the intermeshing of this methodology and the clinical approach of relational psychoanalysis. A theoretical background based on phenomenology and the study of human imitation, neurosciences, research on mirror neurons, research on early development, provide valid empirical support to *mimetic understanding*. The interdisciplinary exchange sustains the permeability of psychoanalysis to other areas of contemporary knowledge and proves useful also to clinical thinking. The clinical value of these ideas will be illustrated following closely the evolution of the therapeutic process. The panel explores *mimesis* as a basic functional mechanism and the method of miming as an effective clinical tool that deepens and enhances *implicit relational knowing* (Stern) in the therapeutic encounter: it highlights the pragmatic nature of our openness to the world. Our social identification is based on intercorporeity as a direct source of knowing others, it is a constitutive endowment of what it means to be human.

### Learning objectives:

At the conclusion of these plenary, participants will have learned:

1. About the studies on human imitation, neurosciences, research on mirror neurons, research on early development, and the utility of an interdisciplinary approach to support mimetic understanding as a valid clinical tool.
2. About the interchange between explicit language and body language, and the clinical utility to improve the therapist awareness about her/his own body language.
3. How to deal with the embodied dimension and the implicit relational knowing of the clinical process. They will also learn the use of imitation as a tool (outside the sessions) for keeping the intercorporeal experience within a relational psychoanalytic perspective.



**Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Plenary Session IV**

## **The Emergence of Meaning from Unformulated Experience**

Presenters: Donnel Stern, PhD, USA and Philip Ringstrom, PhD, PsyD, USA  
Interlocutor & Moderator: Shlomit Yadlin-Gadot, PhD, Israel

### Abstract:

“Unformulated experience” is a relational theory of the unconscious in which unconscious process itself, is understood as involving potential meaning. From this vantage point, explicit meaning in psychotherapy emerges “unbidden”, only as it is created. Thus, meanings that arise in any particular moment, while potentially influenced by what has come before, are simply not predetermined. That which determines what emerges amidst many potential meanings, is powerfully influenced by the configuration of the relational field. Donnel Stern, who has been developing his ideas about “unformulated experience” for almost four decades, will present a case illustration demonstrating how one works in this frame of reference. Philip Ringstrom will present a case illustration, demonstrating how he works with dramatization, narration, and improvisation in relational psychoanalysis. Noting connections between his and Don’s work, Phil describes how an ongoing process of discovery/creation plays a key role in the development of each analytic dyad's drama. In this manner, he illustrates how change becomes both constricted and potentiated in the analytic dyad. Both presenters emphasize the importance of spontaneity in the therapeutic field, along with the cultivation of relational freedom. They each argue that these qualities represent primary aims of clinical psychoanalysis.

Learning objectives:

At the conclusion of this plenary, attendees will learn how to:

1. Orient themselves to "unbidden" and emergent aspects of the field in which the unconscious is reflected in interpersonal unconscious process itself.
2. Employ ideas from drama and narrative theory in discerning emerging repetitions in the field as well as how to improvise off what become revealed in manners which change some of the fundamental premises embedded in the dyad's emerging analytic tale.
3. Foment *curiosity* in the relational field in ways that mitigate self-consciousness and encourage spontaneity while cultivating an atmosphere of increasing *relational freedom*.



**Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**

**10:15 am – 12:15 pm**

**Plenary Session V**

## **Clinical Implications of the Analyst's Subjectivity- On the Impact of Culture, Psyche and Soul**

Presenters: Stavros Charalambides, MA, Greece and Sandra Toribio, Spain  
Discussant & Moderator: Steven Kuchuck, DSW, USA

### Abstract:

Building on the notion that there is no such thing as a baby without its mother, this plenary will instead declare that “if you set out to describe a {patient}, you will find you are describing a {patient} and someone” (Winnicott, 1947). Since the advent of Relational psychoanalysis, clinicians have been able to greatly expand our exploration and understanding of this central if problematic tenet, embracing the assumption that inevitably, “The subjectivity of the analyst enters and affects the interpersonal field and the analysand's psychic life more powerfully than is fully or exhaustively understandable (Mitchell & Harris, 2004).

In this final plenary, an international panel will explore the multiple ways in which elements of the clinician's subjectivity invariably contribute to, impede and/or facilitate the therapeutic action of every treatment. Life experience and culture, the latter broadly defined and manifested through silence, words and gestures, filters through the person of the therapist and infuses each treatment. Theory itself, in fact, is always saturated with the therapist's subjectivity.

Through theoretical exploration and extended clinical examples, we will examine various ways in which we can both attempt to track and make good use of the impact of our subjectivities, as well as come to terms with the limitations on how well we can consciously know ourselves and the ways in which we affect and are affected by our patients.

### Learning objectives:

At the conclusion of these plenary, participants will be able to:

1. Define what is meant by “analyst subjectivity”.
2. Give at least one example from their clinical practice in which some element of their own subjectivity impacted a treatment.
3. Describe why there are significant limitations on how thoroughly a therapist can tract the impact of their subjectivity on a patient.