1. Standing Against Silence: Czeslaw Milosz, Denise Levertov and Poetry of Witness

Presenter: David Shaddock, PhD, MFT
Discussant/Moderator: Doris Brothers, PhD

Abstract:
This paper examines what light the poetry of witness can shed on the experience of mass, collective trauma. “What can exist between the scream and the silence?” Sam Gerson (2009) asks in his paper “When the Third is Dead.” This paper examines whether the poetry of witness to trauma can answer that question. In order to answer these questions, this paper closely examines two poems, “Dedication,” by Czelaw Milosz (2001) (which deals with Poland during World War II, and “Advent 1966,” by Denise levertov (2013) which deals with Vietnam. Traumatized people live in a separate world (Stolorow, 2007), one known to the rest of the world only by smoke on the horizon. The poet, like the analyst, must heal the split between daily life and trauma, must be a bridge between the quotidian, which in the context of trauma takes on a shade of the ominous, and the sequestered trauma. Both poets bear witness to their own inherent limitations and inability to comprehend, much less alleviate the suffering of traumatized others. The paper concludes with a brief case example of a couples treatment in which one partner suffered extreme trauma as a child.

Learning Objectives:
At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to:
1. Identify the difference between the witness function, in regards to trauma, and other selfobject functions.
2. Describe the particular need of traumatized people for a third term between their experience and the everyday contexts in which post traumatic life is lived.
3. Identify the importance of the witness acknowledging his or her own limitations.
2. Louise Bourgeois’s Janus and Selfobject Transference

Presenter: Lynn Somers, PhD
Discussant/Moderator: Ruth Burtman, PhD

Abstract:
In 1968, the French-American artist Louise Bourgeois fashioned five bronze sculptures hung from wire and titled Janus. Formed by plaster poured into flexible molds, and then cast in permanent bronze, these phantasmagorical sculptures evoke part-object sexuality, germination, tumescence, and haptic pleasure while also registering affects of desire, trauma, aggression, ambivalence, and melancholia. The Januses are double-faced like their namesake, the Roman deity of creation, beginnings, and city gates who could gaze both forward and backward, further emphasizing their dialectical nature. Made at a key point in postmodern art history that foregrounded sculpture’s status as a “specific object,” Janus’s own history entwines the aesthetic and the psychoanalytic. Bourgeois conceived the works as whole, autonomous objects within a dynamic field, echoing a paradigm of object relations put forth by Heinz Kohut, Donald Winnicott, Hanna Segal, Michael Balint and others. An avid student of psychoanalysis, Bourgeois ignited inner antagonisms to convert destructive feelings (“bad internal objects”) into something beautiful and acceptable (the “good” art object). This paper explores the Janus pieces as empathic representations or couriers of Kohutian selfobjects. As distinguished from ordinary objects, the “real” aesthetic objects of external reality resonate with internal and indelible phantasy objects. Both types of objects—those of the inner and outer worlds—comprise symbolic reconstructions and as such generate a wealth of multifarious meanings for the artist and the beholder.

Learning Objectives:
At the end of my presentation the participants will be able to:
1. Critique the type and nature of material the artist brings to the construction of the work of art—her own psychoanalysis, history, education, experiences, etc.
2. Identify the “actors” involved in a psychology of the aesthetic based upon symbolization: the work of art; the artist; and the beholder.
3. Analyze how exactly these intersubjective relationships stimulate perceptions and responses to the modern or postmodern work of art.
3. The Fairy Tale of "Bluebeard" and The Opera of Bela Bartok

Presenters:  Wolfgang Milch, MD and Silvia Konetzny-Milch, PhD
Discussant/Moderator: Karin Lebersorger, PhD

Abstract:
The workshop focuses on the narcissistic entanglements in couple relationships, as they were repeatedly discussed or taken up as a topic after the original version of the Bluebeard tale by Charles Perrault (1697) until very recently. The fairy tale touches upon fundamental themes of the relationship between women and men, human cruelty and narcissistic disturbances, which in recent times have attracted general interest and have found their way into literature, the fine arts, music, and especially opera.
In the workshop, the theme will be elaborated on the basis of the fairy-tale and the opera by Bela Bartok and concretized with current clinical examples. The longing for narcissistic love and a selfobject, the challenges and pitfalls, disruptions in the relationship, and rage will be demonstrated.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of our presentation, the participant will be able to:
1. Explain the dynamics in a couple in which at least one partner demonstrates a narcissistic vulnerability.
2. Assess the potential for violence that may be a consequence of narcissistic rage.
3. Discuss pathological accommodations and to how deal with disruptions and repair in couple-therapy
4. Crisis, Fantasy, and Creativity in Vienna: Freud, Kohut, and the Waltz

Presenter: John Riker, PhD
Discussant/Moderator: Lorraine Cates, PhD

Abstract:
I show why crises provoke fantasy and how the resulting fantasies can be delusional and destructive, but also how they can lead to creativity. I focus on the role fantasy played in fin de siècle Vienna, interrelating socio/political history, the Viennese waltz, the invention of psychoanalysis, and the creative work of Klimpt, Kokoschka, Schiele, and Mahler. I inquire into the relationship between fin de siècle Vienna and the Freudian notion that fantasy and creativity arise out of our transgressive wishes. I then turn to post-war Vienna, the rise of Nazism, and Kohut’s notion that both destructiveness and creativity can arise from narcissistic fantasies. I discuss how these fantasies develop and what their complicated relation to the self might be. I conclude by showing that there might be a “Viennese waltz” core fantasy of attaining wholeness that underlies both narcissistic and erotic fantasies—a fantasy that gives us a way to integrate Freud and Kohut. It is a fantasy that explains much about the creativity of Vienna but also lies behind its later embrace of the paranoid grandiose fantasy of Nazism. It is a fantasy that must be balanced by an opposing need to recognize the reality of others and the importance of otherness.

Learning objectives:

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will:
1. Discuss how fantasy plays a crucial role in the psychological life of both persons and nations.
2. Describe how Freudian psychology connects Oedipal desire, fantasy, creativity and our tendency to overvalue creativity and the created object.
3. Explain Kohut’s theory of how narcissistic fantasies both underlie creativity and motivate dangerous attempts to destroy those seen as other.
5. Searching for our Patients Inside our Selves: Finding “Points of Contact” Using Ideas from Stanislavsky’s Method for Actors

Presenter: Bruce Herzog, MD, FRCPC
Discussant/Moderator: Arthur Gray, PhD

Abstract:
There are surprising parallels in the evolution of contemporary theatre and psychoanalysis. Contrary to the misconception that actors are in the business of deception, the modern acting tradition has been continually striving to make the actor’s occupation of a role a more authentic endeavor. Similarly, many analysts presently embrace authenticity in the analytic practitioner. Actors have been well represented by the influential Russian actor and director, Constantin Stanislavsky, who developed a system that produced “experiential” acting, as opposed to the use of external “craftsmanship”. Central to Stanislavsky’s ideas (as well as Lee Strasberg of the American Method school) is the concept of “affective memory”, where actors are trained to access personal past experience to connect to the character being portrayed. They are encouraged to have a repertoire of emotional memories that can be triggered by imagining visual images or feeling physical objects; moving them to a self-state that allows more direct experiencing of a character’s mindset. Analysts might use a related technique, whenever they muse: “I wonder how this feels to her”, beginning the process of triggering affective memory to establish a “point of contact” with the patient. When unable to empathize, therapists might try to access applicable elements of their individual affective memory, intensifying the connection by looking to our own individual histories for events and emotions that bring us closer to patient experience. Several case examples are presented, one where the therapist’s apparently empathic behavior failed because of a missed opportunity to foster the connection using this method, and others showing how the analyst’s use of affective memory resulted in improved understanding of a patient. Taking inspiration from Stanislavsky’s teaching, analysts can foster and formalize the use of their personal emotional history, creating stronger “points of contact” that enhance our ability to understand our patients and their experiences.

Learning Objectives:
Following the presentation, the learner will be able to:
1. Describe the history and technique of Stanislavsky’s System for Acting.
2. Explain the use of affective memory in both acting and psychotherapeutic practice.
3. Utilize the “search for points of contact” as a method to increase understanding and empathic apprehension of the patient.
6. On Saying Yes to Life in Psychoanalytic Therapy and in Nietzsche’s Philosophy

Presenter: Edna Lahav, MA
Discussant/Moderator: Josy Fisch, MD

Abstract:
This article aims to explore the fundamental concept of "YES" in both the fields of philosophy and psychoanalysis. It is characterized by "saying yes to life", as Nietzsche's postulates, and is reflected in psychoanalytical theory, particularly in self-psychology. I will attempt to examine the philosophical question of the value of life as opposed to its negation and the corresponding implications within psychoanalytic self-psychology. A clinical example will serve to demonstrate the subtle moment of "saying yes to life" in times of crisis in the framework of the therapeutic relationship, during hidden moments of transference when it is possible to tip the scales in favor of the life of the psyche. This paper will present the concept of an "annunciating interpretation" as a means of extricating the patient in situations of internal fading and intense despair. Finally, I will focus on the relationship between an internal consent to life and the creative dimension.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this presentation, the conference participants will be able to
1. Assess those moments in therapy when patients question, albeit unconsciously, the value of their life.
2. Describe how one might apply the annunciating interpretation when patients experience intense despair and a loss of hope.
7. How Can Self Psychology and Intersubjectivity Support Leaders to Foster Creativity in Organizations?

Speaker: Klaus Geisslmayr, MBA
Discussant/Moderator: Martin Gossmann, MD

Abstract:
In times of crisis it is essential to foster creativity to find approaches that help individuals dealing with conflicts, tension, aggression and uncertainty. How can contemporary psychoanalysis and self-psychology contribute to develop the culture of organizations towards more creativity? In this paper I will discuss an approach towards leadership development in coaching settings or other short-term intervention processes based on perspectives informed by concepts of both self-psychology and intersubjectivity. While most systemic coaching techniques reflect and search concrete options with regard to actions in a rational mode, leaders are influenced in their activities and in the way they make decisions not only by rational considerations but also by intuition and overt or covert emotional needs. A 3-mode framework of development interactions is depicted that can improve the effectiveness of coaching processes and increase the probability of changes in leadership behavior even under the conditions of stress. In a vignette of a coaching interaction with an entrepreneur, different intertwined modes of the development process are demonstrated.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the three modes of a self-psychology informed coaching process.
2. List six important leadership styles.
3. Explain the connections between used leadership styles and self-object needs.
4. Explain the impact of leadership behavior on creativity in organizations.
5. Explain how the use of the three modes framework of self-psychology informed coaching processes can help leaders to foster creativity in organizations.
8. The Trauma of Trump: Practicing in the Face of the Unimaginable

Speaker: Ilene Philipson, PhD
Discussant/Moderator: Gabriela Mann, PhD

Abstract:
This paper argues that the election of Donald Trump challenges the binary of the authoritative analyst and vulnerable patient as we all bear the weight of the assault of the unimaginable. Through an examination of the ways organized psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts have responded in the past to societal upheaval—particularly the Holocaust—the author maintains that absent a recognition of our own experience of trauma in the current period, we risk enacting our pain and fears with our patients and possibly occlude our shared humanity.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the ways in which Trump’s election has made the therapeutic encounter more of a “participant-participant” endeavor.
2. Explain how the experience of the Holocaust prompted Ernest Jones to call for the exclusion of the social and political from psychoanalysis.
3. Discuss how analytic “delinquencies” are more likely if therapists do not deal with their own experiences of trauma.

Speaker: George Hagman, MSW
Discussant/Moderator: Jill Gardner, PhD

Abstract:
Traditionally psychoanalytic theories have tended to reify psychological life postulating various forces, structures, representations, meaning organizations, psychological fields, etc. Unfortunately, our theories and models have often blinded us to our patients’ most defining human attribute, self-agency. The author argues that it is a person’s awareness of and confidence in self-agency which is at the heart of self-experience. It is agency which underlies our engaged, purposeful and dynamic sense of being, possessing both a distinct internal life and a vital existence in the world. He reviews the theories of the origins of the experience of self-agency, and expands on these findings specifically in regards to the role of self-object experience in its development. An extended discussion of clinical issues and a case report are provided to illustrate the importance of self-agency in psychopathology and psychological health.

Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Assess patients for the presence or absence of self-agency.
2. Demonstrate skill in developing treatment plans which specifically target problems in self-agency and set goals for the development of self-esteem and initiative.
3. Evaluate patient’s skills in social interactions, especially in regards to self-agency.