Wednesday, October 22nd                  Plenary I
1:30 – 5:00 pm

Home, Longing, and Spirit upon the Face of the Abyss

Speakers:    David Grossmann, MA, Shlomit Haber Mosheiov, MA and
              Eldad Iddan, MA

Chair and Interlocutor:    Raanan Kulka, MA

Abstract:
This plenary will open with presentations under that title by Shlomit Haber-Mosheiv, and Eldad Iddan:

Home. One word. A whole world. Language, the psyche's bedding of growth, leads us upon its wings, and opens
for us the space of the concept's meaning, thereby enabling us to unfold a primal infrastructure for a discourse about
home; about its deep and complex essence. Our home, the home within us, the home we are, the home we make for
the other. A home exists as the motion between walls and openings, between its being close and open, between its
being segregating and separating and being a connector. A withdrawal from that motion, a "castlehood" of home on
the one hand, or the giving up of its defining, sheltering walls, on the other, may create an abyss: the abyss of
darkness upon anything that isn't me or mine, the abyss of alienation and estrangement, or the abyss of chaos and
 perversion. And it is spirit, spirit alone, that can hover upon the face of the abyss, and form the possibility of
connecting where separation prevails, of naming where blurring spreads. We as humans, as a people and nation, we
the therapists, seek the restoration of that motion between life within the walls of our selfhood and the possibility of
going beyond it into a personal and interpersonal existence, not only through the boundary; we encounter the danger
of entrenchment, or the danger of being effaced, embodied in a defuse existence; we seek the position of being-
given-to that would restore the spirit, and seek the spirit that would restore a state of being-given-to. This open,
spiritual stance of viewing home, brings to mind people's undefeatable longing to the place where they belong, their
home. An attempt would be made to explore the what is it that causes people to adhere with such insistence to their
homes, and keep returning to them after their having been devastated by natural disasters or wars? Or, other people
who wouldn't leave their homeland, even though, rationally speaking, it provides them with shattered walls and only
precarious safety; confronting them with frequent physical and emotional dangers to their very existence? What is it
that keeps them there? How do we, as therapists, deal with these issues as they enter our consulting rooms? How do
we use our self psychological sensibility to create an emotional home, in which the inner and the contextual
outcome of this state on those whose subjectivity, like our own, somehow bonds them (and us) so tightly to their
and our) endangered homes, the homes in the name of and on behalf of which we speak? The second part of this
plenary will be devoted to a personal conversation with renowned Israeli author David Grossmann about the subject
Where Do I Feel at Home. Chair and interlocutor of the Plenary will be Ra'anani Kulka.

Learning Objectives:
At the conclusion of this plenary, the participant will be able to:
1. Trace and analyze philosophical reflections concerning the primal ethical- linguistic- psychological infrastructure
   of the notion-concept of 'Home' as a movement between 'closeness' and 'openness'.
2. Create and elaborate personal therapeutic stance of being a spiritual-emotional home for patients and other
   fellow-humans, helping them in their quest for Home "upon the face of the abyss" of life.
3. Assess and utilize world renowned author David Grossman's personal and cultural contemplations of the
   conference theme: “Where Do I Feel At Home”.
Thursday, October 23rd
8:30 – 11:00 am

An Existential and Evolutionary Perspective on the Experience of Belonging and Not Belonging

Speaker: Malcolm Slavin, PhD
Discussant: Rabbi Daniel Epstein
Chair & Moderator: Karina Goldberg, PhD

Abstract:

We need art so we do not die of the truth ---------Nietzsche

In the course of human evolution there was, as I see it, a form of universal human trauma that I shall call our “original loss.” This primal loss is symbolized in the familiar myth of Adam and Eve. Their exile from Eden represents the archetypal loss of home. It is a loss of a harmonious embeddedness, of a perfect sense of belongingness in the world. It results in a sense of removal and a degree of alienation from the rest of nature. Virtually every culture has its own version of that archetypal metaphor in Genesis. I believe the universality of this theme—specifically of Eve's move to eat the fruit of “the tree of knowledge and good and evil”—signifies what was actually an immense evolutionary change: The move into our uniquely human capacity for language, reflective self-awareness and the necessity for moral choices. An earlier, automatic sense of knowing, being known and belonging within a world built around an instinctual inter-connectedness shifted into a world fraught with existential anxiety and doubt: Anxieties about the haunting sense that our meanings are constructed, made up; about how our lives are precarious, finite, mortal; and about if, how—and at what cost to ourselves—we attach and attempt to belong in any relationship or social group. To bear this—indeed to reap the full benefits of our cognitive gains, our symbolic capacities—we became capable of imaginatively creating a vital subjective sense of connectedness—an “attachments,” in the world. We also developed the crucial capacity to negotiate ways of belonging to, as well as remaining usefully separate from, our social world: The drive to be part of—and apart from—the world to which we belong. Often called the creation of “transitional space,” the building of a good-enough sense of belonging entails a grieving of that lost, primal, pre-human, embeddedness. We create sacred and secular narratives to explain it, build sacred and beautiful spaces to restore it, make soul-stirring music and dance to re-embed ourselves in meaning and belonging—magically, beyond language, in our bones. At some level, the psychoanalytic process—like art, poetry, music and religion—can be understood as an experience that allows us to know the depth and quality of that universal, primal longing to restore what has been lost. To grieve that loss as it intertwines subtly but powerfully with our individual losses. My talk will delineate the ways in which such large, existential currents may be embedded in each clinical hour. And how, in the therapeutic relationship, our patients probe our capacity to open ourselves, to feel and imagine our way into a radical form of empathy: An empathy built around the analyst as a separate other who nevertheless suffers and shares our own version of the same universal, existential issues for which our patients have sought help.

Learning Objectives

1) Understanding how, in the course of human evolution, our species may have endured a significant loss of a former embedded state of connectedness and automatic knowledge of nature.
2) Understanding how the enduring “trauma” of this “original loss” is at the heart of existential anxiety and our continuing need to create meaning through art imagination.
3) Recognizing the manifestation of this “original loss” in individual lives and the treatment process.
4) Understanding how an evolved, adaptive probing for realness and reciprocity emerges as therapist and patient mutually encounter shared, human, existential dilemmas.
Home Is Where We...Begin, Develop, And Belong. Home Is...

Case Presenter: Rachel Kella, MA
Discussants: Eva Rass, EdD and Andrea Harms, PhD
Chair & Discussant: Jacqueline Gotthold, PsyD

Abstract:
As D.W. Winnicott said “Home is where we start from”. In keeping with the theme of this conference this plenary panel will examine the treatment of a child from the unique, subjective and evolving meanings associated with the notion of ‘home’; beginning, developing and belonging. Focusing on the early developmental and relational experiences expands our understanding and capacities to treat our young patients as well as our adult patients. Rachel Kella will present a sensitive treatment of a child who struggled with issues of strangeness and difference versus belonging. These struggles were reflected and impacted by her developmental struggles, her parent’s marriage, and her parent’s respective individual adjustments. The discussants will speak to the interwoven issues of this case and the theme of ‘HOME’ from corporeal, psychological, developmental, racial and cultural stances as they effect psychotherapeutic work with children and adults.

Learning Objectives:
As a result of this panel participants will be able to:
1) Demonstrate an understanding of self psychological concepts such as; empathic connection, empathic failure and idealization as they relate to the treatment of children and their families.
2) Demonstrate an understanding of early developmental issues of belonging and difference as they impact a child’s growth and development, as well as, impacting on the treatment of adult patients.
Living an Era of Psychoanalytic History

Speaker: Ruth Gruenthal, MSS
Chair: Shelley Doctors, PhD

Abstract:
On the occasion of this year’s Kohut memorial lecture I offer some reflections on my experience, as clinician and teacher, of living the era in psychoanalytic history in which Kohut first presented his ideas and in which these ideas developed into the pluralism of positions that marks contemporary self psychology. I note contributions that particularly influenced my practice and those carried specific personal significance for me. More broadly I point to the import of Kohut’s work for a more general shift in conception of an optimal analytic attitude.

Learning Objectives

Revisit Kohut’s seminal ideas; consider the mainstream psychoanalytic context in which they developed and their more general influence on visions of an optimal psychoanalytic attitude.
The Impact of Culture, Immigration and Language on the Sense of Belonging

Case Presenter: Doris Brothers, PhD
Discussants: Carla Leone, PhD, Gianni Nebbiosi, PhD and Tessa Philips, PhD
Chair: Jill Gardner, PhD

Abstract:
This panel will focus on the conference theme of what contributes to the subjective sense of belonging and not belonging, of feeling accepted and welcome vs. rejected and excluded. A case of someone who immigrated to the United States from Egypt as a child will be presented to highlight the impact of culture and migration on the sense of feeling at home. Seen first in couples treatment, followed by individual treatment, the case also offers an opportunity to reflect on the relative roles of these two modalities in the treatment of a case involving both marital and individual issues. Discussants from Italy, Australia, and the United States will each expand on different aspects of the clinical material and the issues it raises.

Learning Objectives:

As a result of this panel, participants will be able to do the following:
1) Heighten awareness of issues involved in choosing and sequencing modalities of individual and couples therapy with the same or different therapists.
2) Increase awareness of how culture, migration, language, and other external factors impact the sense of belonging.
3) Understand what factors contribute to finding a relational home, both in outside relationships and in the therapeutic relationship, via intersubjective conjunction of history and dynamics.