

Paper Session A-1

Defiance, Creativity and the Origins of Resilience:

The Path from Abuse to a New Life

Presenter: Bruce Herzog, MD, FRCPC

Moderator: Wolfgang Milch, MD

Discussant: Jacqueline Gotthold, PsyD

Abstract:

Picasso said that “every act of creation is first an act of destruction.” Creating new kinds of relatedness requires some elimination of what came before. It starts with an act of defiance, turning one’s back on one’s upbringing, and ends with a creative process: the consideration of healthier alternatives in order to do things differently. Continued contemplation of interactive alternatives evolves into sustained fantasies of idealized relational interactions, forming a fantasy relationship, which can be actualized in future real relationships. An extended case is presented of a man who converted the violence of a dangerously abusive background into an art form, and similarly created new ways of relating which he actualized in therapy. As therapists we might consider the treatment process as a culminating act of creative defiance in our resilient patients, who are enlisting us to help them actualize a preferable way of being with others in their world.

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to explain how a defiant position can function to create new kinds of relatedness. They will be able to recognize when patients are attempting to actualize a fantasy relationship, as an alternative to pathological forms of relating they were exposed to in development.

Paper Session A-2:

Putting Our Heads Together: Mentalizing Systems

Presenter: Margaret Sperry, PsyD, MFT

Moderator: Scott Davis, MD

Discussant: Jeffrey Stern, PhD

Abstract:

Mentalization is a concept at the forefront of psychoanalytic theorizing that provides a way of understanding and working with trauma states, and especially patients who have difficulty reflecting on their own states and experiences let alone entertaining alternative perspectives. The capacity to mentalize enables one to understand one's own experiences and to comprehend the subjective states, feelings, and intentions of others. In contradistinction to Peter Fonagy and his colleagues who view mentalization as an individual intrapsychic developmental achievement, I argue that mentalization is an emergent capacity of a relational system that is mutually and reciprocally mediated by the other members of the system. When a capacity to mentalize is present, it reflects and facilitates the system's complexity. Alternatively, the absence of mentalization is reflected in the rigid interactional patterns characteristic of traumatized systems. Thus, the capacity to mentalize is a system potentiality that is realized when the system self-organizes in a way that produces its own agent of change.

At the end of the presentation, participants will understand that the capacity to mentalize is an emergent capacity of a relational system and therefore mediated by that system's interactions.

Paper Session A-3:

Heinz Kohut's Crucial Period: 1971-1977

Presenters: James Anderson, PhD & Sivan Schneider, MA

Moderator: Karen Martin, MA, LCSW

Discussant: Michael Clifford, MDiv, LCSW

Abstract:

This paper is an examination of Heinz Kohut's life during the crucial period of 1971 to 1977, the period from the publication of *The Analysis of the Self* to the publication of *The Restoration of the Self*. During this time he made a break with the psychoanalytic establishment. It was a difficult step for him to take, because he had received a sense of stability and security from his identification with Freud and psychoanalysis. Victor Turner's theory of liminality provides a lens for viewing this period in Kohut's life, a period in which one is in a "between" state; Kohut was no longer a member of mainstream psychoanalysis but was not yet a self psychologist. From the pressure on his self, along with the danger of vulnerability, Kohut gained further first-hand experience with the self, and that experience assisted him in his clinical and theoretical understanding of the self.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the participant will be able to: describe the aspects of vulnerability of the self that a person may go through when breaking away from a stable, secure situation, as Kohut did when he developed self psychology as a new psychoanalytic paradigm.

Paper Session A-4:

Compassion and Dialogue:

Bridging the Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Understanding of the Other

Presenter: Roger Frie, PhD, PsyD

Moderator: Lester Lenoff, MSW

Discussant: John Riker, PhD

Abstract:

This paper addresses the issues of human compassion and the capacity for dialogue in the psychoanalytic domain. Taking its cue from Martha Nussbaum's recent explorations of compassion, the paper argues against the classical psychoanalytic account of human nature. Instead, it proposes a view of human sociality that expands on the works of Kohut and continental philosophers and analysts, particularly Martin Buber, Ludwig Binswanger, and Emmanuel Levinas. The paper suggests that compassion and dialogue are both grounded in our fundamental situatedness with the Other (person). Compassion is the attitude, and dialogue is the capacity, that we bring to human engagement, whether in the psychoanalytic domain or beyond.

Paper Session A-5:

“That’s Me”: Self Psychology and the Problem of Identity

Presenter: Arnold Goldberg, MD

Moderator: Paul Ornstein, MD

Discussant: David Solomon, MD

Abstract:

Beginning with an effort to distinguish the Erikson term “identity” from its status as a social psychological term from that of “self” as a psychoanalytic term, this essay underscores Kohut’s insistence that empathy is an essential ingredient in depth psychology. The point is extended to an evaluation of language involving interpersonal, intersubjective and motivational systems. A case is used to illustrate how one makes these distinctions to support this basic thesis of self psychology.

The article aims to distinguish terms employed in psychology and psychoanalysis based upon their data base and the universe of discourse in which they exist.

Paper Session A-6:

A Ship Made of Paper: Sailing the Seas of the Forward Edge

Presenter: Christine Kieffer, PhD, ABPP

Moderator: James Fosshage, PhD

Discussant: Amy Joelson, LCSW

Abstract:

This paper will examine how modes of play in child treatment can create clinical momentum and enable a resumption of growth through a process of procedural enactment, empathic immersion, ongoing rupture and repair of fragile relational bonds--allowing an engagement of previously dissociated affect states and building expanded capacities for both self-reflective thought and creative action. Therapeutic action lies not only in interpreting what is already present but is also shaped by the co-constructed development of new relational modalities, with a focus on the "forward edge" of development.

At the end of the presentation, the participant will be able to describe how an emphasis on the forward edge of development can facilitate clinical momentum.

Paper Session A-7:

Pregnancy, Lesbianism, and Intrusion: A New Look at Some Old Themes

Presenter: Jane Reid, PhD, MSW

Moderator: Annette Richard, MPs

Discussant: Sandra Kiersky, PhD

Abstract:

The psychoanalytic literature on the therapist's pregnancy is informed by an almost uniform set of assumptions. The pregnant therapist is assumed to be heterosexual and is further assumed to have become pregnant through heterosexual sexual intercourse. These primary assumptions are thought to have a number of implications in the therapeutic dyad. Pregnancy is thought to be an incontrovertible revelation of the fact of the therapist's sexual life – that she is sexually involved with a man and that this sexual relationship was the genesis of the current pregnancy. In addition to these assumptions about its onset, pregnancy is also thought to be a special sort of intrusion into the analytic space. This paper examines these assumptions in light of lesbian pregnancy and reproductive technology, which open up many more possibilities about family configurations and the onset of pregnancy. Implications for the transference are substantially considered. One result of this examination will be a more articulated account of the lesbian pregnancy – an account largely absent from the current literature. A second result will be to shed light on pregnancy more broadly and thus to expand our notion of what therapist pregnancy may come to mean in a treatment. The discussion is situated in the context of several of the author's own clinical experiences including work in an agency setting and in private practice, work in long-term and in planned, short-term psychotherapy, and the author's experiences as a pregnant therapist as well as the partner of a pregnant woman.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the participant will be able to articulate and evaluate the transference themes stimulated by the therapist's pregnancy generally and the lesbian therapist's pregnancy specifically.

Paper Session A-8:

How Does It Happen?

An Expansive Proposal of Therapeutic Actions in My Own Analysis

Presenter: Carol Levin, MD

Moderator: Brenda Solomon, MD

Discussant: Sheldon Meyers, MD

Abstract:

1. At the conclusion of this presentation attendees will have an expanded view of the therapeutic actions of their own analyses and psychotherapies.
2. Attendees will have a model for the opening up of supervision.
3. Attendees will begin to consider writing about their own treatments, a rich source of unmined data about therapeutic actions.

Paper Session A-9:

Pathologizing Twinship:

An Exploration of Robert Stolorow's Traumatocentrism

Presenter: Ilene Philipson, PhD

Moderator: Amy Eldridge, PhD

Discussant: Steven Knoblauch, PhD

Abstract:

In his most recent work on trauma, Robert Stolorow rejects Kohut's understanding of twinship as an inherent developmental need and asserts that it is a reaction to trauma. In this paper I argue that this theoretical move is part of Stolorow's evolving worldview that both privileges the traumatic and uses the universal language of philosophy to offer "a God's eye view" on why we seek out bonds with others and create human community. Just as Freud turned to biology (e.g., the death instinct) as a means of grounding his increasingly pessimistic worldview, Stolorow turns to Martin Heidegger to situate his. I argue that the context specific thinking of sociology may offer us a way of seeing Stolorow's traumatocentrism as historically situated, and hence subject to change.

At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant will be able to explain the differences between Kohut's and Stolorow's understandings of twinship, and describe the consequences of these differences for how we think about the creation of human community and connections with others.

Paper Session A-10:

Being-Toward-Life:

A Twice-told Story of Death, Intergenerational Trauma and the Resolution of an Analytic Crisis

Presenters: Doris Brothers, PhD & Jane Lewis, LCSW

Discussant & Moderator: Ruth Gruenthal, MSS

Abstract:

Our sense of being obligated to one another for the selfobject experiences necessary to sustain selfhood sometimes requires us to “join our dead” through denials of our own aliveness. Self-psychologically informed treatment that emphasizes what Marian Tolpin called “forward edge strivings” can bring us back to life. In this paper, an analyst and a patient, who is herself an analyst, each provide differing accounts of a crisis that severely disrupted their therapeutic relationship. The resolution of this crisis involved the relinquishing of trauma-generated denials of life by both therapeutic partners.

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to explain how trauma-generated denials of life may be relinquished in self-psychologically informed treatment.