

Paper Session B-1:

Kohut's Vision and the Nuclear Program of the Self

Presenter: Frank Summers, PhD, ABPP

Moderator: Sanford Shapiro, MD

Discussant: Volker Kraft, PhD

Abstract:

Although Kohut made clear that the resolution of the selfobject transferences was to “release” the nuclear program of the self, self psychology has tended to emphasize the mobilization and resolution of those transferences to the relative neglect of how the nuclear program of the self is brought to fruition. Kohut himself said very little about the process by which the nuclear self emerges and becomes realized. Subsequent self psychological theory has likewise focused on the management of the transference with little contribution to the evolution of the nuclear program of the self. It is argued that one cannot assume that once the selfobject transferences are resolved, the nuclear self smoothly replaces the historical defensive patterns. The process by which the nuclear self becomes the lived self is fraught with anxiety and conflict. This paper proposes a technical strategy, only hinted at by Kohut, for facilitating the realization of the nuclear program of the self. It is argued that this process, which requires a shift in analytic stance, fulfills Kohut's vision of psychoanalysis as a means for the creation of an authentic self.

At the completion of this presentation, the participants should be able to describe the role of the nuclear program of the self in Kohut's view of the aims of psychoanalytic therapy and the alterations in technique required for the realization of the nuclear self.

Paper Session B-2:

Career Dysphoria: The Emotional Wounds of Work Disruption and the Forward Edge

Presenter: Leslie Lampe Long, Med, LMHC

Moderator: Andrew Morrison, MD

Discussant: Joye Weisel-Barth, PhD, PsyD

Abstract:

Through this paper, the author introduces and explores the concept of “career dysphoria,” the impairment to the sense of self that ensues as a result of work disruption. The author posits that individuals who have used work as a proving ground for unconscious fantasies as a result of unmet childhood selfobject needs are more susceptible to career dysphoria. Individuals may be susceptible to career dysphoria along a continuum from mild to severe, with career dysphoria affecting the “working wounded” (LaBier, 1986) in its milder forms. Through her work with otherwise healthy patients overwhelmed by career dysphoria, the author describes the importance of working with the forward edge in helping these individuals’ overcome career dysphoria. By working with the forward edge within the therapeutic selfobject tie, archaic fantasies related to work are revealed, understood and transformed, and the patients’ strivings for a vitalizing work-life are remobilized. Within the therapeutic relationship with its forward edge transferences and counter-transferences, a parallel process is also presented in which the analyst’s healthy strivings benefit as well.

At the conclusion of this presentation, the participant will be able describe how patients experiencing career dysphoria resume a more fulfilling, invigorating and deeply satisfying work life. The participant will learn how to work with these patients in a therapeutic process that explores the specific selfobject fantasies that define the meaning work has for these individuals in the context of the patients’ central self/selfobject transferences in relation to the therapist.

Paper Session B-3:

Holding, Dropping, Catching, and Holding On: Three Transformations in the Arc of a Therapeutic Engagement

Presenter: Deborah Sherman, MS

Moderator: Carol Munschauer, PhD

Discussant: Jeffrey Trop, MD

Abstract:

This paper details transformative shifts which occurred in the creation of a psychoanalytic relationship in which the patient demanded a ‘real’ relationship with the analyst, yet had little affective language or access to her inner life and core experience of self. In the first two years of treatment the analytic relationship was established in the realm of bi-directional implicit relational knowing via a process of affective attunement in which the analyst tracked her own and the patient’s kinesthetic expressions and interactions—a bodily conversation. The first shift occurred when a cross-modal transfer from the kinesthetic mode to the visual mode was made by the patient, who verbally described vivid visual scenes of affective interaction between two people. The analyst and patient find in these scenes a verbal language through which the treatment progresses. A second shift occurs when analyst and patient are able to symbolize, and therefore to process, heretofore unformulated states/feelings of deadness which have threatened the relationship with traumatic rupture. As the patient and analyst develop ways of mutually regulating these states, they experience increased feelings of aliveness both separately and together. These feelings of aliveness confirm the experience of a ‘real’ relationship.

At the end of this presentation, the participant will be able to describe multiple modes of intersubjective relating, including 1) implicit and pre-symbolic interactive patterns, 2) verbal explanation of interactional scenes, and 3) the processing of symbolic material, and to explain the transitions between them.

Paper Session B-4:

Complex Elektra:

Orchestrating a Murderous Mother-Daughter Bond

Presenter: Amy Joelson, LCSW

Moderator: Rosalind Chaplin Kinder, MFA

Discussant: Marcia Dobson, PhD

Abstract:

This presentation will revisit the myth of Elektra as it is set forth in Strauss's 1909 opera. Looking through a lens of contemporary self psychology, colored by systems theory and infant research, the concept of the Electra complex will be reviewed. The Electra complex, proposed by Jung in 1912 to convey the feminine version of Freud's Oedipal complex, will be recast as the story of how a girl grows up within her relational matrix. In the case of Elektra, the surround is particularly deadly. To make sense of Elektra's plight, the focus will be on the murderous mother-daughter bond, zooming in on issues of separation, attachment, and individuation. I will explore how her striving to separate results in a hijacking of her attachment-individuation process. Given our understanding of the intersubjective matrix and the constant embeddedness of being, I question, what is the possible role for separation? For heuristic purposes, the character of Elektra will be analyzed as if she were a patient in treatment with me. In this way, the presentation moves from a focus on operatic action to therapeutic action.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to appreciate the powerful bond that exists in anxious, hostile, adversarial parent-child relationships. The participant will discover that exploring and building on this attachment, an attachment that may seem outside the patient's awareness, will yield for the patient a more positive and enriched sense of individuality.

Paper Session B-5:

Dancing on the Edge:

Engaging With Forward & Trailing Elements of Transference

Presenter: Judith Teicholz, EdD

Moderator: Elizabeth Carr, MSN

Discussant: James Anderson, PhD

Abstract:

In this paper I use an extended clinical vignette to explore the optimal balance between forward and trailing edge interpretations of difficult transference-countertransference encounters.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to define forward and trailing edge transference enactments and be conversant with an argument for focusing on the forward edge, even in the face of the most painful “pathological repetitions.”

Paper Session B-6:

Psychoanalytic Complexity and The Forward Edge:

It's (Almost) All About Attitude

Presenter: William Coburn, PsyD, PhD

Moderator: Christa Paulinz, MA, PAD

Discussant: Paula Fuqua, MD

Abstract:

Psychoanalytic complexity posits ideas about the influence of a variety of attitudes that inevitably impact the clinical surround. One of these key attitudes includes the assumption that emotional life and emotional development are emergent properties of a larger, complex relational system—the attitude that we thus “find ourselves” inextricably embedded in a larger relational, life context (for which we cannot be entirely responsible but for which we nevertheless must come to assume responsibility). Additionally, it presumes the attitude that it is through a deepening awareness of our contextuality that, paradoxically, we are offered the conduit through which we might find greater emotional freedom. This attitude articulates well with that of our presumptions about forward-edge phenomena and the importance of locating, following, elaborating, and articulating them in the clinical setting. Drawing from the seminal ideas of Marian Tolpin and her abiding focus on forward-edge phenomena, this paper examines, with the help of a clinical illustration, the foundational importance of psychoanalytic complexity and forward-edge attitudes and their essential role in the formation of therapeutic action and change.

The educational objective of this presentation is to explore and elaborate the crucial role and impact of the analyst's attitude in the clinical setting as it pertains to the contextuality of human experiencing and the forward-edge, developmental phenomena to which the analyst draws the patient's attention.

Paper Session B-7:

Psychoanalysis, Creativity and Hope:

Forward Edge Strivings in the Life and Work of Choreographer Paul

Taylor

Presenter: Carol Press, EdD

Moderator: Bertram Cohler, PhD

Discussant: Howard Baker, MD

Abstract:

In this paper I wish to honor Marion Tolpin's deep understanding of our need to create and to dance. Psychoanalysis involves working through processes of transference and countertransferences to address and repair developmental arrest. The goal is the restoration of health and growth. Artistic creativity involves processes of exploration and discovery of the relationship between sense of self and aesthetic medium, to evolve a new form. The goal is an external product derived from self-experience, distinguishing our aesthetic ways of being, and ultimately, enhancing culture. Psychoanalysis and creativity are not interchangeable; the working through processes of analytic work cannot be replaced by artistic undertakings. Psychoanalysis also provides a comprehensive language to examine and understand the psychological and emotional components of creative activity in pathology, and in health. What psychoanalysis and creativity share are relational processes that involve examining, elaborating and giving form to feeling; they share the promise of transformation. Hope is the foundation for this promise. Marian Tolpin's description of forward edge strivings in her article, "Doing Psychoanalysis of Normal Development: Forward Edge Transferences" captures the source of these hopes. This paper honors Marian's memory by exploring the meaning of forward edge strivings in psychoanalysis, and applying this to an understanding of dancer Paul Taylor's relationship to his life and his choreographic processes.

At the end of the presentation, participants will understand the connections between forward edge strivings and creativity.

Paper Session B-8:

School Based Treatment for Maltreated Children:

A Self Psychology Ecological Fusion

Presenters: Charlene Cook, MPH; Faye Mishna, PhD; and Jane Morrison, MA

Moderator: Mark Smaller, PhD

Discussant: Susanna Federici-Nebbiosi, PhD

Abstract:

At the conclusion of our presentation, the participant will be able to understand and describe the use of self psychology theory and concepts as applied to child individual therapy informed by an ecological framework. In addition the participant will understand how qualitative research can illuminate and inform clinical practice.

Paper Session B-9:

Worlds of Probability Versus Absolutisms of Everyday Life: A Review of Robert Stolorow's Book: "Trauma and Existence"

Presenter: Philip Ringstrom, PhD, PsyD

Moderator: Michelle Sweet, PhD

Discussant: Hazel Ipp, PhD

Abstract:

This paper undertakes an examination of Robert Stolorow's (2007) theory of trauma as presented in his book, *Trauma and Human Existence: Autobiographical, Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Reflections*. In so doing, it takes issue with: 1) the idea that trauma involves the "shattering of absolutisms of everyday life", 2) the conflation of Stolorow's model of trauma with Heidegger's ideas about anxiety as it relates to Being-toward-Death and 3) the "hidden moral agenda" of first, linking authenticity to trauma and second, instantiating the "relational home" of "twinsip" in an "us versus them" division between those who have been traumatized and the so-called non-traumatized, "normals." This division (which will be challenged in this paper) posits that the traumatized (at least the more visionary among them) are able to see through the veil of "absolutisms of everyday life" in a manner that lends to their living their lives more authentically. Their experience is contrasted with so-called "normal's" who have not had this veil shattered and who therefore naively and defensively live their lives inauthentically so as to preserve their illusions of stability, predictability and tranquility.

To learn to differentiate trauma as a result of "assaults of the unimaginable" from the "shattering of absolutisms of everyday life" as well as to distinguish "death anxiety" in our awareness of our mortality from prospective trauma that Stolorow argues follows from our facing our finitude.

Paper Session B-10:

Implicit Affective Engagement: Past, Present and Future

Presenter: Maria Slowiaczek, PhD

Moderator: Arthur Gray, PhD

Discussant: Ruth Burtman, PhD

Abstract:

The past, present and future are essential components of every psychoanalytic relationship. Relational expectations are constructed from past experiences, shared emotional experience is lived through between analyst and patient in the present and the future looms large as both participants try to imagine new possibilities that will unfold as a result of this experience. Contemporary relational self psychology has introduced a focus on empathic immersion in the analytic relationship, where implicit aspects of living in the present together open up new potential for the patient's future. In addition, working through past experiences can often be an emotional and relational experience, where the analyst relives past difficulties with the patient. Within the context of the current relationship, the analyst and patient are altering the patient's sense of herself in those past experiences and as a result, they are creating an alternative outcome – one in which the patient can access a positive sense of self in her present life. In this paper, I will discuss ways that contemporary relational self psychology emphasizes empathic immersion in the ongoing experience of the analytic relationship, in the present and the future, but also in the past relationship that could have been. A case vignette will be presented to illustrate these concepts.

At the conclusion of this presentation the participant will have an increased understanding of how contemporary theory in self psychology focuses on the analytic relationship, including how implicit communication is a form of therapeutic action. In addition, the participant will have an increased awareness of how relational communications are affecting the treatment and the patient's sense of herself in the past, present and future.