



**Institute of Contemporary  
Psychotherapy+Psychoanalysis**

A Community for Self+Relational Theory+Therapy

## **November 2021 Newsletter**



### **Exciting First Conference of RPI-II By Bill Pinney**



**Bill Pinney, PhD**

On October 2nd, Galit Atlas, PhD inaugurated this year's Relational Perspectives Institute-II. She presented a compelling delineation of her and Lew Aron's elaboration of the concept of enactment as a form of dramatic dialogue between the therapist and the patient. The term "dramatic dialogue" was coined by Sandor Ferenczi (when he was struggling and experimenting with moving beyond interpretation as the exclusive technical intervention in therapeutic work). Atlas and Aron have further developed the notion of dramatic dialogue in several journal articles and ultimately their 2018 book *Dramatic Dialogue: Contemporary Clinical Practice*. They propose that the term embodies aspects of Relational theory's view of the therapeutic dyad as possessing myriad possibilities. These possibilities arise out of the multiple self-states of both patient and therapist as they live together in the present moment, informed by the past but also the (un)anticipated future. Building upon Chused's (1991) felicitous definition of enactment as "a nonverbal communication often cloaked in words," Atlas shared with us her and Aron's term "generative enactments" to speak to the ultimately growth-enhancing moments (or periods) of stuckness that can arise in the clinical encounter.

In a dynamic and compelling manner, Atlas argued that enactments in the analytic dyad are not only restrictive and repetitive, but may also be generative and growth-enhancing. The day began with Atlas giving her audience a thorough review of the term enactment and its many iterations over the last forty years of clinical theorizing across multiple psychoanalytic schools. She then went on to articulate the ways patients and therapists enact and reenact both what the dyad is actively talking about as well as what they cannot yet talk about. She introduced the notion of the prospective function of enactments and the ways the minds of both the therapist and the patient unconsciously "look forward" to future possibilities. Atlas grounded this elaborated theory of enactments in extensive case material. She vividly described her work with several different individuals as examples of dramatic dialogues that expand upon what both parties are bringing into the therapeutic relationship in unanticipated ways. The audience enthusiastically received Atlas' material, and there were many moments of give-and-take between Galit and members of the audience that contributed to a day marked by interaction and excitement.

This was the first of four exciting offerings that comprise this second Relational Perspectives Institute (RPI-II); Anthony Bass, PhD will be presenting on December 4th, 2021.



## The Children's Corner

### How Do We Play?

#### By Tom Holman



**Tom Holman, PhD**

A four-year-old comes into the playroom. He wanders around, looking but not committing to anything. He sees a chess set in a place not accessible to him, and asks for that to be put on the table. "Let's play," he says. I set it up as a traditional chess game. I might be thinking, *Why don't you just go to the dollhouse and play your family drama, and I can say what it means, and you can say, Thanks, Dr. Holman, now I don't need my symptoms anymore.* That's what happens in the child therapy textbooks, or so I seem to remember.

He is enthralled with chess, especially the horses. Pieces move around the board, and he tells me to play with them, so I move pieces around, maybe as though they are ice skating. White is mixed up with Black, pawns and bishops and rooks are gliding together, around and into each other and away from each other. He is amused when they bump and when they fall down. The horses seem to be in charge of things, and perhaps are friends rather than opponents. I don't know what is going on, and I want to make connections: Is it the black and the white? Is he reaching for the inaccessible, Oedipal adult world? Is it the horses? Is it a previous experience with people playing chess? So many hypotheses! I become aware of Winnicott speaking in my mind:

*In this kind of work we know that even the right explanation is ineffectual. The person we are trying to help needs a new experience in a specialized setting. The experience is one of a non-purposive state, as one might say a sort of ticking over of the unintegrated personality. I [refer] to this as formlessness... The patient on the couch or the child patient among the toys on the floor must be allowed to communicate a succession of ideas, thoughts, impulses, sensations that are not linked except in some way that is neurological or physiological and perhaps beyond detection....(Winnicott, 1971)*

An adult comes into the office. She wanders a bit, then sits down. She looks around, not committing to anything. Then she wants to talk about my selection of furniture in the office, and what she would have selected. I might be thinking, *Why don't you just talk about your issues and free associate, and I can say what it means, and you can say, Thanks Dr. Holman, now I don't need my symptoms anymore....*

We will now play with furniture.



## Coming Events

### Relational Perspectives II

The RPI II Conference #2 on December 4 will feature Anthony Bass, Ph.D. -- Dialogues of the Unconscious: Mutual Analysis and Uses of the Self in Contemporary Relational Technique. Conference #3 on February 26, 2022 will feature Avgi Saketopoulou, Ph.D. -- Thinking and Working Relationally with Transgender Patients. These conferences are filled.

Note that Conference #4 on April 30, 2022 will feature Hazel Ipp, Ph.D. and Malcolm Owen Slavin, Ph.D. -- Three Characters in Search of Empathy: Empathy as a Complex Relational Achievement. This will be ICP+P's Annual Conference, and ICP+P members can register for this conference separately from the others. Registration will open soon.



## Training and Education

### Couples Program 2022

The Couple's pre-program study group is underway and is still open. The group runs for an hour and half on Wednesdays from 10:30-12 and is coordinated by Aaron Bourne, one of the Couples program faculty. Other faculty join on a rotating basis, presenting case

material and applying psychodynamic theory to clinical intervention. The group offers the opportunity for those accepted to the program to begin exploring the material covered in the program, set to begin September 2022. In addition, the experience allows the class to begin to form as a group. If you interested in the Couple's pre-program group and/or the class starting in Fall 2022, please contact Michael Wannon at [menaw1@aol.com](mailto:menaw1@aol.com) or 301-325-1840.

[Click here to learn more about the program...](#)

## Psychoanalytic Training Program 2022

We are pleased to announce that the ICP+P Psychoanalytic Training Program is initiating a new training opportunity that will begin in January 2022. The program will be offered on a remote basis. At a future point (when travel is considered safe), we plan to hold two in-person meetings/year in Washington, DC. Please see the Psychoanalytic Training Program page on the ICP+P website for further details. A study group for interested individuals is underway. This group provides an opportunity for participants to come together to study contemporary psychoanalysis, learn more about psychoanalytic training at ICP+P, and begin to cohere as a group. To schedule a conversation to learn more about the group or program beginning in January, contact Elizabeth Carr, Chair of Admissions, [elizabethmcarr.msn@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethmcarr.msn@gmail.com).

[Click here to learn more about the program...](#)



## News + Notes

### Announcement: Shoshana Ringel's new book

ICP+P member Shoshana Ringel, Ph.D.'s new book was published in October: *Loss, Grief, and Transformation: the Therapist's Personal Experience in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis*. Shoshana has put together contributions by authors from different psychoanalytic perspectives, and different countries. The authors address the scope of grief and mourning in the therapeutic dyad and carefully examine how the patient and therapist's experience intersect and permeate the analytic space and the therapeutic process. Chapters examine the personal loss of parents and partner, losses generated by mass trauma through the lens of the Holocaust, the COVID-19 pandemic and losses involved in the process of migration. A chapter by ICP+P's Sandra Hershberg was the basis for our recent conference, "Mothering a Child with A Visible Facial Difference."



### We love hearing from you!

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Nilou Mostofi, ICP+P Administrator, at [icppeast@km-direct.com](mailto:icppeast@km-direct.com)

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