



November 6-9, 2025, at the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown, 700 San Jacinto Street, Austin, TX 78701

As we move through unprecedented individual and collective pressures, our human capacity also allows us to experience joy amidst the turmoil. We can dream the future and feel, think, imagine, and even behave in different ways. Join us at this conference to examine how to go forward, applying multiple psychodynamic perspectives to what we are facing in the consulting room, in the broader world, and in ourselves – in the darkness and in the light.

PLENARY

Performing Empathy: How AI May Be Transforming Us and What It Means for Therapeutic Practice

Ricardo Ainslie, Ph.D.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has given rise to many questions relevant to psychoanalytic developmental and clinical theories. For example, how do AI-mediated platforms influence processes of identification and mirroring that are theorized to play such an important role in the formation of a sense of self? And what are we to make of the proliferation of AI-assisted therapeutic encounters that increasingly emphasize “Empathic AI” as accessible and inexpensive alternatives to in-person psychotherapy? These and other related questions will be explored in this presentation.

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to

- Explain the developmental implications of AI for identificatory and mirroring processes that help shape the sense of self.
- Describe the current status of AI platforms as treatment interventions.

References

Arjanto, P., Senduk, F. F., Nahdiyah, U., & Utami, M. S. (2024). AI and ethics in mental health: exploring the controversy over the use of ChatGPT. *Journal of public health*, 46(2), e340-e341.

Knafo, D. (2021). Digital desire and the cyber imposter: A psychoanalytic reflection on catfishing. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 31(6), 728–743.

Rodado, J., & Crespo, F. (2024). Relational dimension versus artificial intelligence. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84(2), 268-284.

Education and Practice Gap

AI has emerged as a powerful, complex reality that is profoundly transforming every aspect of individual and collective life, from psychotherapy, to medicine, to commercial activity, to education, to the practice of law. Our understanding of the impact of AI on developmental and therapeutic processes lags far behind, as AI seeps into virtually every corner of our lives. This presentation fills this gap by fulfilling the imperative that we learn about the power and limitations of AI both from our vantage as practicing clinicians as well as in terms of how these developments may be shaping the lives of those seeking our therapeutic help.

Bio

Ricardo C. Ainslie, PhD, ABPP M.K. Hage Centennial Professorship in Education, Dept of Educational Psychology, Univ of Texas at Austin. Director of Research and Education and for AMPATH Mexico at Dell Medical School. Past Adjunct Faculty (1994-2011), Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute (Center for Psychoanalytic Studies). Founding member and past president, Austin Psychoanalytic. Member, editorial board, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, and *Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Society*. Ad hoc journal reviewer, including *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, and *Cultural Anthropology*. Fulbright Scholar (Spring 2022), Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna, Austria. Book author, documentary filmmaker, and photographer, on social and cultural subjects. Private Practice, Austin, TX.

PLENARY

Never Look Away: Uvalde, American Patriarchy, and the Slaughter of Innocents

Carolyn M. Bates, PhD

This presentation will explore questions behind the current American epidemic of mass school shootings. It posits that cultural complexes underlie the country's willingness to let its children continue to be victimized, as though to sacrifice them on the altar of an archetypally violent ethos. There is a strong likelihood that internal experiences of alienation, resentment, and contempt are often at play in the individuals who carry out such violence. However, this paper also suggests that the uniquely American glorification of "the lone wolf," the "rugged individual," and the "misunderstood hero" fuels a supportive background for mass shooters in our nation, a nation that appears to cling to ancient patriarchal attitudes in its valuing of weaponry. Such patriarchal attitudes, underscored by capitalism and the profits of the gun industry, are implicated in the territorial adhesion to American gun-rights and in the high cost paid by the blood of innocents.

After attending the presentation, participants will be able to

- Describe intrapsychic and social dynamics that may contribute to a perpetrator's vulnerability to take up arms against peers.
- Define a "cultural complex."
- Identify "cultural complexes" that may support perpetrators' choices to take up arms against peers.

References

Czubinska, G. (2020). Difference—Is it hated or desired? Reflections on the totalitarian state of mind. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 65(2), 325–344.

Odde, D., & Vestergaard, D. (2021). A preliminary sketch of a Jungian socioanalysis—an emerging theory combining analytical psychology, complexity theories, sociological theories, socio- and psycho-analysis, group analysis and affect theories. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 66(2), 301–322.

Wamser-Nanney, R. (2020). Understanding gun violence: Factors associated with beliefs regarding guns, gun policies, and gun violence. *American Psychological Association: Psychology of Violence*, 11(4), 349–353.

Education and Practice Gaps

While psychoanalytic theory traditionally considers the problematic intrapsychic dynamics of individuals, this presentation invites the participant to consider the larger cultural beliefs that may contribute to episodes of mass shootings, including the availability of weapons without concomitant social services to protect those vulnerable to using them toward negative aims. Clinicians will more likely encounter

victims of mass violence rather than perpetrators and potential perpetrators and taking larger cultural questions into account may assist the clinician to monitor any countertransference temptation to dehumanize perpetrators in their work with victims. The presentation will fill the gaps cited here.

Bio

Carolyn Bates, PhD North American Co-Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*. Senior Training Analyst, Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts. Past-President, Texas Seminar of the I-RSJA. Author and presenter, on ethics, synchronicity and collective trauma, feminist politics, and the reconsideration of myth and the influence of cultural/socio-political events on the analytic container. Jungian analytic Private Practice, Austin, TX.

PLENARY

Systemic Re-Transmission of Trauma: Defending Against the Lost and Found

Felecia Powell-Williams, EdD, LPC-S, RPT-S, FABP

The paper will address the ongoing societal intrusions that emotionally handicapped the inter-racial therapeutic relationship of the psychoanalyst and the patient. The treatment began in an institutionalized setting with the children who were searching for their lost maternal object, and then the therapeutic work centered on the mother and her search to find the lost self. The presentation will illustrate the various disruptions of the human bond, as a result of intergenerational transmission of trauma and the impact on relational value.

After attending the presentation, participants will be able to

- Discuss the impact of systemic re-transmission of trauma as it relates to self-identification.
- Identify various societal intrusions that influence the therapeutic relationship.

References

Alpert, J. L. (2015) Enduring Mothers, Enduring Knowledge: On Rape and History. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 51:296-311

Holmes, D. E. (2019) Our Country 'tis of We and Them: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Our Fractured American Identity. *American Imago* 76:359-379

Abbasi, A. (2018) The Analyst's Bodily Sensations as Important Information in Clinical Work. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 38:530-540

Education and Practice Gaps

In a review of the literature, there remains a great deal that is overlooked as how re-transmission of trauma is seen systemically in clinical treatment. This presentation will address the education and practice gaps, as they pertain to retransmission of trauma and its impact on the psychotherapist-patient relationship.

Bio

Felecia Powell-Williams, EdD, LPC-S, RPT-S, FABP Past President, Board of Directors, Center of Psychoanalytic Studies, Texas (CFPS), 2019-2025. Graduate, CFPS. Co-chair, CFPS Child and Adolescent Training Program. Chair, CFPS Faculty Committee. Child and Adult Candidate and Consulting Analyst (TA/SA), CFPS. Board member, Houston Psychoanalytic Society, PsiAN, and other APSA committee appointments. Author, articles and chapters on loss. Private Practice, Houston, TX.