

Division of Psychoanalysis (39)
At the 2009 APA Convention
Toronto, ON, Canada

The Evolving Landscape of Psychoanalysis: Panoramas of Possibility

Call for Proposals

Deadline for Submission: Monday, Dec. 1, 2008

For over a century, psychoanalysis has sought to articulate the nature of what it means to be human. Freud began by contemplating the psyche as driven by internal pressures, instincts and their derivatives. He wisely left his theories open to refinement as he understood that this “psychoanalysis” was in its infancy. We have seen psychoanalysis grow and redefine itself with the advent of Ego psychology, Object Relations theory, and Self Psychology. More recently, the field has opened up in a network of new ideas about theory, technique, and the very nature of being human with the developments in Relational theory, and Intersubjective theory. Research and observations from other disciplines such as neuroscience, cognitive science, Attachment theory, infant research, the paradigm of Chaos theory and Dynamic Systems theory, have fueled an expansion and integration of psychoanalytic thinking and practice. Psychoanalysis, it seems, has taken on a life of its own. New data brings new possibilities for interpretation, shifts in perspectives, and vast new vistas of possible questions for investigation.

In developing a program for the 2009 convention, we are seeking a focus on an exploration of our evolution and its impact on theory, practice, culture, values, and the nature of the questions we ask regarding our study of the universe of the psyche. Some considerations might be: Have we evolved into a new “species”, or does there remain a direct link to our roots in the classical tradition? What is possible now that was not possible for Freud and his colleagues at the beginning of his “creation”? What concepts have come full circle? In practice, can we offer our patients something now that is different from what was possible then? Are we more accessible to a general population? Can psychoanalysis gain the trust that Freud’s generation once enjoyed, in a culture that is currently evolving toward quick fixes and medication? Have we diluted or enriched the psychoanalysis that Freud set out to develop? Is it possible that we have done both? What are the gains and losses of our evolution? Besides its application to our understanding of individual development, how do we apply our expanding knowledge base to our understanding of the formation of groups, the evolution of cultures, and the dynamics of families and couples? And, finally, are we any closer to understanding the truths governing the complex nature of our human

existence? Perhaps more importantly, are we any closer to asking the right questions (and how will we know)?

All proposals must be submitted electronically via the APA website. Instructions for accessing the specific site will be forthcoming from APA at www.apa.org/convention.

Please direct questions regarding submission of proposals to the program co-chairs:

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