



Magritte: *The Human Condition* (1933)

SYMPOSIUM 2024

HYBRID (LIVE & VIRTUAL) CONFERENCE

**THE REAL REAL: VIRTUAL,
INTRAPSYCHIC,
AND OTHER**

IPTAR



April 13, 2024

**Goldwurm Auditorium
Madison Ave. & 98th Street**

THE REAL REAL: VIRTUAL, INTRAPSYCHIC, AND OTHER

We all know what reality is. We knock on a door, drink milk from a glass, take a deep breath. The real world is what we see, touch, taste, take in—experience through our senses. It's tangible, out there and also inside us. It's pretty clear until, of course, we stop to think about it.

Then reality becomes fuzzier. Sure, we know that matter, full of atoms, is mostly vacuous. But even more relevant to us, what we take to be reality is actually only an internal representation of it as experienced and coded in various parts of our brain, for example the visual system from eyes to occipital cortex, hippocampus for emotional and long-term memory, etc. So it's hard to know what real is beyond how we define the undefinable and believe it to be. The *Bhagavad Gita*, an ancient, sacred Hindu text, describes life itself as a dream.

There are, of course facts and things that happen, but memory is fallible. Events that we're certain of (even traumatic ones) may never have occurred. Even when they did, they're necessarily colored by prior and subsequent experiences and transferences. What's remembered is, well, re-membered (e.g., put back together like the pieces of a puzzle) often along the lines of our wishes and needs. So it's even hard to establish a personal narrative or a coherent timeline about your own life, and to know the facts with certainty. If the truth sets us free, which it does, than how do we know the truth?

In his attempt to speak about the nature of reality, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) framed his paradigm in terms of real, symbolic and imaginary. For Lacan the Real is an internal derivative of our senses (forever severed from by our entrance into language), the Imaginary is our external world and our perceptions of it, the Symbolic is what meaning the psyche makes through language and culture. For Lacan, what's real is fundamentally missing from awareness and unobtainable, so wished for and pursued, unconsciously, as an object of desire.

We define intrapsychic reality, which is a good and useful distinction. But it is a complex and imperfect process that one comes to know and understand his own psyche. There's what we know we know, what we don't know but come to learn, and then much that we may never know about ourselves. Our earliest memories, say from the first two years of life, don't even seem to be encoded into long-term memory because the neurons of the hippocampus that code for such memories are not yet myelinated. What we might describe as the anamnesis of early childhood is "forgotten" in large part because it wasn't encoded into retrievable memory.

Of course, good mothering and parenting is essential for becoming a healthy person. Still, we recognize that it's hard to know what the reality was at the time. The past plays out in the psychoanalytic situation in intricate and fascinating ways, and we as psychoanalysts and patients become more aware of the complexities of intrapsychic life for both the patient and ourselves. Perhaps there's some conflict resolution in the process or at least a shifting of the constellation of conflicts. Most of us would agree that is integral to the talking cure.

Now with "telemedicine" we meet with patients virtually. So psychodynamic and psychoanalytic treatments are conducted worldwide with patients we've never met in person. In a way it's astonishing that a patient can have a profoundly therapeutic experience with a therapist he's never actually met. Psychoanalytic programs such as CAPA (China American Psychoanalytic Alliance) necessarily use this approach as their model for psychoanalytic treatment and training, and there is a strong evidence base of excellent results.

It isn't that much of a leap to the next development in our field. Some treatments like DBT, CBT and even short term psychodynamic treatments are already manualized, Machines with visual and voice recognition can already identify human emotions better than trained experts. LLM (large language models) are already effective with some limitations at responding to questions and making observations about verbal content. Can we be far off from therapies based in AI? In fact, medical diagnosis and treatment is starting to use AI to better diagnosis, treatment and care.

So as we examine our shared reality—virtual, intrapsychic and other—let's keep an open mind as our field advances. But let's also remember the human element: love heals. Even as our theories are bettered by scientific inquiry and our therapeutic approaches by technology, we must keep each other in mind as people and do our best to help patients learn about themselves and the world, to grow personally, and to change.

—Ahron Friedberg, MD

SYMPOSIUM 2024

THE REAL REAL: VIRTUAL, INTRAPSYCHIC, AND OTHER

MOUNT SINAI—MEDICAL CENTER
April 13, 2024

Organizers:

Ahron Friedberg, MD Meeting Chair
Michael Silverman, PhD Meeting Co-Chair
Jennifer Harper, MDiv, NCPsyA, LP Coordinator

CONSORTIUM OF PSYCHOANALYTIC AND PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS (C3PO):

The American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis; American Institute for Psychoanalysis; The American Society of Psychoanalytic Physicians; The Association for Child Psychoanalysis; Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies; Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies; The Contemporary Freudian Society; Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology (Division 39), American Psychological Association; Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, Washington, DC; Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research; Karen Horney Clinic; Los Angeles Institute and Society for Psychoanalytic Studies; The Menninger Clinic; The Metropolitan Institute for Training in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy; National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis; National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis; The New York School For Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis; New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; The Postgraduate Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; Psychoanalytic Center of California; The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia; The Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center; Westchester Center for the Study of Psycho-analysis and Psychotherapy; William Alanson White Institute.

C3PO also includes the following Publications:

The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, International Journal of Controversial Discussions, Psychodynamic Psychiatry, Psychoanalytic Dialogues, Psychoanalytic Psychology, The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, The Psychoanalytic Review, and The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child.

“The real is what resists symbolization absolutely.”

— Jacques Lacan,

*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I,
Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954*

SYMPOSIUM 2024

THE REAL REAL: VIRTUAL, INTRAPSYCHIC, AND OTHER

= SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024 =

8:45 to 9:00 am Introductory Remarks:

Ahron Friedberg, MD

9:00 to 9:45 am Plenary Address

Maggie Zellner, LP

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Discuss how ideas about neuropsych psychoanalysis are clinically relevant.
- Describe issues related to clinical work such as depression, and PTSD manifest in the brain.
- Explain how considerations about neuropsych psychoanalysis inform treatment.

= Coffee Break: 9:45 to 10:15 am =

10:15 to 12:00 pm Clinical Panel: Virtual Psychoanalysis

Chair: Elise Snyder, MD

Presenter: Darlene Bregman Ehrenberg, PhD

Discussants: Vladan Novakovic, MD, Nunzio Gubitosa, MPhil, NCPsyA, LP,
Renee Obstfeld, PhD, NCPsyA, LP

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify the uses of teletherapy in clinical situations.
- Discuss both the strengths and limitations of teletherapy.
- Use different psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches and techniques to optimize clinical interventions.

= LUNCH: 12 Noon to 1:15 pm =

1:15 to 1:30 pm Introductory Remarks:

Michael Silverman, PhD

1:30 to 2:30 pm Keynote Address: The Power of Connection

Presenter: Jane Hall, LCSW, FIPA

This presentation addresses the application of personal connection in the psychotherapeutic situation.

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify and explain how neuroscience informs the study of empathy.
- Discuss empathy and connection in terms of current neuroscientific research.
- Utilize scientific contributions to inform treatment

2:30 to 4:00 pm **Afternoon Panel: Individual Reality and Society**

Chair: Heather Berlin, PhD

Presenters: Danielle Knofo, PhD, Todd Essig, PhD, Xiaosi GU, PhD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify how different perspectives on reality are manifest societally.
- Discuss how recognizing different aspects of reality can be a tool for advancing society
- Apply intrapsychic, virtual and other aspects of reality to clinical treatment and care.

4:00 to 4:30 pm **Concluding Remarks & Wrap-up:**

Ahron Friedberg, MD



=Co-Sponsors =



Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health System, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR); National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP), and The Consortium for Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic Publications and Organizations (C3PO).

CE CONTACT HOURS:6.0

IPTAR is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0022.

NAAP is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Practitioners as an Approved Provider of continuing education for licensed psycho-analysts #P-0019.

= Participant Bios =

HEATHER BERLIN, PhD, MPH is a neuroscientist, clinical psychologist, and associate clinical professor of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She explores the neural basis of impulsive and compulsive psychiatric and neurological disorders with the aim of developing novel treatments. She is also interested in the brain basis of consciousness, dynamic unconscious processes, and creativity. Berlin received her doctorate from the University of Oxford, and Master of Public Health from Harvard University, and trained in clinical neuropsychology at Weill Cornell Medicine's Department of Neurological Surgery. She's a visiting scholar at the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and was a Visiting Professor at Vassar College, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology/University of Zurich, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Berlin is a committee member of the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a passionate science communicator. She hosted series on PBS and Discovery Channel and makes regular appearances on StarTalk with Neil DeGrasse Tyson. She's also appeared on the BBC, History Channel, Netflix, National Geographic, and TEDx.

Darlene Bregman Ehrenberg, PhD, ABPP has been writing about working at what she has described as the "Intimate Edge" of the analytic relationship since she was still a candidate in analytic training. That first paper was published in 1973. Her focus, and what brought her into the field, was a concern about how to be able to work with and help patients whom classical analysts were viewing as "not analyzable." Her view was that the issue was the limits of the analytic theories they were relying on and that being able to help more disturbed individuals who were not responsive to those techniques required different ways of working. Her subsequent papers, her 1992 book *The Intimate Edge* and her many papers following developed this further. There are many papers and a new book that are yet to be published. Her focus has been and continues to be on how to work analytically with more traumatized patients whom others saw as "unanalyzable" some of whom had been in prior analyses for over forty years with no real change happening. She was very moved by the thinking and work of analysts from both the USA and other countries whose thinking differed from the classical analytic views more common in the USA. She has lectured widely around the world (Japan, multiple places in Europe and South America, Canada, Russia, Australia and more, and she teaches and supervises internationally. Her focus at this meeting will be on the limits of "interpretation" and she will present examples illustrating how moments of facilitating new and formerly unimaginable experiential possibilities in live analytic moments can have more power than any "interpretation" an analyst can offer, and which analytic "interpretations" can at times foreclose.

Todd Essig, PhD is Faculty and Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the William Alanson White Institute, Faculty at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis, member of the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN) Advisory Board, and of the International Psychoanalytic Association's Task Force on Contemporary Education. From 1994 to 2009 he was founder and director of The Psychoanalytic Connection (aka psychoanalysis.net). Widely known as a pioneer in the innovative uses of mental health technologies, he publishes and lectures widely. He has served on editorial boards for *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* and *JAPA* and he co-edited, with Gillian Isaacs Russell, a special issue of *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* on psychoanalysis and technology. He was the Co-Chair of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Covid-19 Advisory Team, and was awarded Distinguished Service awards by APSaA and the NY State Psychological Association for his efforts. For 10 years, until the pandemic hit, he wrote "Managing Mental Wealth" for *Forbes* where he covered the intersection of technology, psychology, and culture. In his clinical practice, he treats individuals and couples.

Ahron L. Friedberg, MD, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Editor, The Academy Forum of the American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis. Book Editor, Psychodynamic Psychiatry. Co-Chair, International Council of Editors of Psychoanalytic Journals. Research interests focusing on translational neuroscience in the treatment of anxiety, depression, PTSD and other clinical disorders. Director, Symposium Series. Recent books include *Two Minds in a Mirror: Psychotherapy and Personal Change* (Routledge 2020), *Through a Screen Darkly: Psychoanalytic Reflections During the Pandemic* (Routledge 2021), *Towards Happiness: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Finding Your Way* (Routledge 2022), and *Faces of Love: Life Studies in Psychoanalysis* (Routledge 2023). Regular contributor to *Psychology Today* and various academic journals.

Dr. Xiaosi Gu, PhD, is currently Associate Professor in Psychiatry and Neuroscience, and Director of Center for Computational Psychiatry at Mount Sinai. After receiving a dual degree in Psychology and Economics from Peking University in Beijing, Dr. Gu moved to New York City to pursue a Ph.D. in Neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Gu then completed her postdoctoral training in computational psychiatry at Virginia Tech and the Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging, University College London (UCL). During her time in London, she also set up and has since been directing the world's first computational psychiatry course at UCL. Before joining Sinai, Dr. Gu previously held faculty positions at the University of Texas, Dallas and UT Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Xiaosi Gu is one of the foremost researchers in the area of computational psychiatry. Her research examines the neural and computational mechanisms underlying human beliefs, emotions, decision making, and social interaction in both health and disease, through a synthesis of neuroscience, cognitive science, and behav-

ioral economics. Her lab has also recently started to use human intracranial recording techniques to examine the neuroelectrical and neurochemical substrates of high order cognition.

Nunzio Gubitosa, MPhil, NCPsyA, LP is an instructor in the D Min program at Hebrew Union Jewish Institute for Religion (NY campus). He is the former Director of training at Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute (NY city), as well as the former clinical supervisor of the Spiritual Direction program at Fordham University Bronx, NY. Currently he is on the boards of both the National Association for The Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) and the American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis (ABAP, Inc.). He received a Masters of Arts degree in Psychology from Hunter College and a Masters of Philosophy in Psychology from CUNY (City University of NY). He did his Psychoanalytic training at Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute in New York city. He is a New York State licensed psychoanalyst with a private practice in New York.

Jane S. Hall, CSW, FIPA, former President of the Contemporary Freudian Society, past boards of IPA, ApsA, member AAPCSW. National and international lecturer; author of: *The Power of Connection* (2022) IPBooks; *Roadblocks on the Journey of Psychotherapy* (2004) and *Deepening the Treatment* (1998), published by Jason Aronson; and other articles. Faculties of three NY institutes. A founder of the New York School for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, Jane created and was the first director of the Psychotherapy Track at CFS.

Jennifer R. Harper, MDiv, NCPsyA, LP, is Director of the Interfaith Doctor of Ministry program for Clinical Education and Pastoral Care at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute for Religion (NY Campus). She is a faculty member at the Blanton-Peale Institute for Religion and Health, and former Dean at the Westchester Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (Bedford Hills, NY). She is past-President of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP), and current Chair of the American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis, Inc. (ABAP, Inc.). Ms. Harper received the Masters of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City and a Certificate in Psychoanalysis from the Westchester Institute. She is the 2020 Recipient of the Helen Flanders Dunbar Memorial Award for significant achievement in the field of Clinical Pastoral Care and Counseling. She is in private practice in New York City and Bergen County, NJ.

Danielle Knafo, PhD is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, past professor at Long Island University, and current faculty and supervisor at NYU Postdoctoral Program and Adelphi's Postgraduate Program. Danielle is a prolific writer and international lecturer. She has written ten books and dozens of articles in addition to art catalogue essays and art criticism. Her areas of expertise are: art and creativity, trauma and psychosis, sex and gender,

and, recently, technology and A.I. Her latest book is *From Breakdown to Breakthrough: Psychoanalytic Treatment of Psychosis*. Danielle maintains a private practice in Manhattan and Great Neck, New York.

Vladan Novakovic MD is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst affiliated with William Alanson White Institute for Psychiatry Psychoanalysis, New York, and Ichan school of Medicine, Mount Sinai WTC Health Program in New York City. His professional track is Psychiatry at the Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, followed by fellowships at Columbia University Medical Center and Ichan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and completing the training in psychoanalysis at William Alanson White Institute in New York. He has an unwavering dedication and interest in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy and continuing commitment to the advancement of the field. He is supervisor of the intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy program at the William Alanson White Institute and taught courses on "Treatment of a Difficult Patient," Mentalization-Based Psychotherapy, and many others. He serves as a Director of the New York Chapter of American Society of Psychoanalytic Physicians (ASPP), and is an active member of many professional organizations: American and International Psychoanalytic Association, American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry, and Psychoanalysis, and the American Psychiatric Association. In addition, he is an active member of the International College of Person Centered Medicine. He is an author and co-author of many publications in peer-reviewed journals and authored few books. He presented his clinical and research work nationally and internationally. He lives in New York and has a private practice in the city.

Renee Obstfeld, PhD, LP, LCAT is a licensed psychoanalyst located in Greenwich Village. She specializes in treating addictions and trauma, as well as helping people navigate stressful life transitions. Renee's focus in treatment is on reclaiming and defining one's internal resources and strengths, resulting in a greater sense of agency and control over one's life and less reliance on self-defeating patterns. This work often involves working with embodied beliefs, beliefs that can range from inhibiting our potential to outright self destructiveness. She has B.A., 1981, from Sarah Lawrence College and an M.A., 1988, New York University. She Currently enrolled in The Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center and Ph.D. program in Psychoanalysis at Heed University.

Elise Snyder, MD, was born in New York City in 1934, graduated in 1954 from Queens College (a branch of the City University) and from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (1958), one of 10 women in a class of 120. Her Internship and psychiatric residency were at Bronx Municipal Hospital Center (Albert Einstein College of Medicine-Jacobi Hospital). She has taught in several departments of psychiatry and is, at present, an Associate Clinical Professor at the Yale University College of Medicine and a Visiting Professor at Sichuan University, Chengdu, China She is the longest member

of the APsaA Board of Directors (33 years), has chaired many APsaA committees, is Past President of the American College of Psychoanalysis and the Founder and President of the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance. Dr. Snyder is the recipient of Sigmund Freud Award of the American Association of Psychoanalytic Psychiatrists and the Presidential Award of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry. She is widowed and has two daughters: Margaret Hamilton, M.D., a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and Katherine Snyder, Ph.D., a Professor of English Literature at Berkeley University. She has five grandchildren

Michael E. Silverman, PhD is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He is a licensed psychologist, clinician, and cognitive neuroscientist. His current scholarly activities, in part supported by the National Institutes of Health and the Stanley Foundation, are focused on bridging several scientific areas, including epidemiology, immunology, genetics, and cognitive behavioral neuroscience, towards the goal of early identification and treatment of psychiatric disorders through better disease characterization and clinical-translational science. Among his more recent accomplishments have been the first published fMRI study of postpartum depression, the most extensive epidemiologic study of postpartum mood change to date, and the most extensive study exploring the relationship between childbirth and maternal mood change. In addition, Dr. Silverman has extensive experience in neuropsychiatric and cognitive assessment and has developed numerous novel studies probing the relationship between the brain and behavior. His work has resulted in numerous peer-reviewed publications, book chapters, public health policy recommendations, and awards.

Maggie Zellner, PHD, LP Executive Director, The Neuropsychoanalysis Foundation. Co-editor, Neuropsychoanalysis. Author, papers on the intersection of neuroscience and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalyst in private practice, New York City.

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