


The background of the poster is a painting. The top half shows a woman in profile, looking down at a child she is holding. The bottom half shows a young child in a blue patterned shirt, looking towards the viewer. The painting style is expressive and somewhat somber.

CONFER

# Intergenerational Trauma

**How can we intervene to disrupt the transmission of parent-to-child trauma and maximise healing for future generations in ruptured families and communities?**

**International conference 10–13 Sept 2009**  
**Venue: Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London WC1**



**“... multigenerational transmission of trauma is an integral part of human history. Transmitted in word, writing, body language and even in silence, it is as old as humankind.”**

*Dr Yael Danieli*

## **Introduction**

Hidden, and often shrouded in shame and silence, the traumas of our parents, grand-parents and ancestors are deeply woven into the psychological fabric of the living, operating within the psyche as an unseen but potent force, often manifesting as a psychological fixity that leads to vulnerability throughout life.

This interdisciplinary conference of psychotherapists, psychologists and anthropologists, is a gathering of experts in this field. Together we will consider the potential for healing the intergenerationally traumatised individual, and the intergenerationally traumatised community.

We will ask: What are the mechanisms of transmission of traumatic affect from one generation to the next? What psychotherapeutic processes make resolution of those events a possibility? How do we work with traumas that are shared inside ruptured communities? How can we intervene psychotherapeutically and socially to break the cycles of the past in relationally traumatised families and maximise healing for the future? What concepts are most useful in understanding and transforming the interplay between individual psychological processes and macro-political events?

# Programme

Thursday 10 September 2009

## 10.0 **Situating Intergenerational Trauma: Identity and the Construction of Descendent Lifeworlds**

**Dr Aaron Denham**

Through applying the integrative approaches of sociocultural and psychological anthropology, this presentation emphasizes the culturally diverse ways descendents experience, embody, transform, and transmit intergenerational trauma and identity. The presentation will broaden our understanding of intergenerational trauma by examining its resilient outcomes, narrative construction, and its relationship with the existential imperatives and lifeworlds of descendents.

11.15 **COFFEE**

## 11.45 **From Fixity to Continuity of the Self**

**Dr Yael Danieli**

An individual's identity involves a complex interplay of multiple spheres or systems from the biological and intrapsychic to the environmental and international. These systems dynamically coexist along the time dimension to create a continuous conception of life from past through present to the future. Ideally, the individual should simultaneously have free psychological access to and movement within all these identity dimensions. Exposure to trauma causes a rupture, a possible regression, and a state of being "stuck" in this free flow, which I have called fixity. The characteristics of the fixity will determine both life-long effects and multigenerational legacies of trauma. This presentation will consider how fixity can be shifted to restore a continuity of self. Routes to integration may include re-establishing, relieving and repairing the ruptured systems of the survivor and his or her community and nation, and their place in the international community.

13.0 **LUNCH BREAK**

## 14.0 **Recognizing Ancestral Baggage**

**Dr Isha Mckenzie-Mavinga**

Eurocentric theory and attitude are challenged when we work with the family origins, cultural context and intergenerational trauma of the Afro-Caribbean population, and such approaches can cause a further trauma – that of non-recognition. This presentation considers how we can recognize and witness the inherited effects of slavery and colonialism in the narratives of Afro-Caribbean psychotherapy clients to acknowledge the impact of trauma on those gone before so we can work towards integration in the present.

15.0 **TEA**

## 15.30 **Revealing is healing? Truth, Reconciliation, and Mental Health in South Africa and Northern Ireland**

**Dr Brandon Hamber**

Using personal experience from engagement with victims and survivors during the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and peacebuilding work

in Northern Ireland, the paper will delve into the complex interplay between individual psychological processes and macro-political interventions such as truth commissions. Specifically the paper will outline how transitional justice processes such as truth commissions can be used to maximize healing.

**17.0 Panel Discussion: How can psychological insights support peace processes in intergenerationally traumatised communities?**

**18.0 END OF DAY and de-briefing process group**

## Friday 11 September 2009

**10.0 Horrors revived are the key to healing in intergenerational trauma: working with the “horrified other” in the transference**

**Jean-Max Gaudillière**

Transference is the heart of what happens not only with traumatized patients but also in cases of madness. Through clinical examples of intergenerationally traumatised patients, I will emphasise the role of what Hannah Arendt (1951) calls a “horrified other”. This not a ‘fault’ affecting the objectivity of the observer – the analyst - but a threshold that must be crossed in order to make contact with a world that is otherwise unreachable. It is also a tool that can change the course of a destiny. The analyst must not rest content with registering the transference ‘interference’ but must find a way to express it in the session, for this impression does not belong to him; it is a co-creation.

**11.0 COFFEE**

**11.30 Casus Belli – the intrusion of historical truth in the therapeutic dynamic**

**Françoise Davoine**

The psychoanalysis of the intergenerational transmission of trauma opens a field of discovery between two researchers - the patient and analyst, in the frame of the transference or what Lacan calls the ‘real’ and Sullivan calls ‘the dreadful not me’. Through clinical vignettes, we will address critical turning moments in the therapeutic work - *Casus Belli* - when the story of a family, crossed by events in history, begins to intrude. At that precise moment, the psychoanalyst’s story and history is triggered on particular points that resonate with erased historical truth. The analysis of this interference is what matters.

**12.30 Engaging Our Dead: intergenerational trauma in the therapeutic relationship**

**Dr Doris Brothers**

Although silent and invisible, the traumatized ancestors of both patients and therapists figure importantly in the therapeutic encounter. The resulting traumatic attachments, which involve dissociative processes that reduce the complexity of lived experience and produce rigid and constricting modes of relating, are transmitted from generation to generation. A clinical example illustrates how intergenerational traumas in the histories of both patient and therapist made it impossible for either to fully mourn her dead. Instead,

both felt compelled to join them by dissociating aspects of their aliveness. A therapeutic crisis could not be resolved without the recognition of these trauma-generated attachment patterns.

### **13.30 LUNCH BREAK**

#### **14.30 The symbiotic entanglement - how trauma gets transferred from one generation to the other**

##### **Professor Franz Ruppert**

Evidence from psychotherapy shows that trauma gets transferred mainly via the bonding process between mother and child. A mother suffering from trauma causes a bonding trauma for her child in one way or another – of course mothers don't want to do, but the unconscious mechanisms to cope with a traumatic experience involuntarily lead to great difficulties in the mother-child-interaction. Many types of mental illnesses can be explained by the symbiotic entanglement between mother and child on the base of trauma.

### **15.45 TEA**

#### **16.15 The transgenerational effects of trauma – how constellation work can help to understand and to step forward**

##### **Professor Franz Ruppert**

The constellation method can help to make transgenerational psychological effects visible. It clearly shows how in bonding processes the feelings of one person become the feelings of another. If you don't know and understand that many problematic feelings that are inside you in the end not really are your own feelings than maybe you are struggling all your lifetime to copy with them with no success. One very important challenge for psychotherapy is how to find ways out from the symbiotic entanglement with the trauma feelings of our ancestors. This presentation will demonstrate a method for doing so.

### **18.0 SMALL GROUP PRESENTATION AND VIDEO LINKED DISCUSSION**

#### **The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma: Exploring Prenatal Attachment**

##### **Dr Briana S. Nelson Goff and Dr Kami L. Schwerdtfeger**

Exploring mother-infant prenatal attachment is an important focus in understanding the intergenerational consequences of trauma. Recent research investigating the impact of past attachment and trauma on expectant mothers' attachment to their unborn child suggests that although trauma history, in general, does not appear to negatively impact expectant mothers' current prenatal attachment with the unborn child, the nature of interpersonal trauma experiences do have a significant relationship to prenatal attachment. Current findings have important implications for researchers and clinicians interested in better understanding the systemic impact of trauma across generations.

### **18.0 OR De-briefing process group**

### **19.0 END**

## 10.0 **The impact of intergenerational trauma on families and paediatric survivors of sexual abuse**

### **Professor Kimberly Frazier**

Kimberly Frazier will introduce the factors associated with child sexual abuse (CSA) and the intergenerational influences that impact the presence and etiology of CSA among young children. The impact of CSA on primary caregivers will also be discussed and specific interventions that aid in ameliorating the affects of transgenerational trauma with young children and their families. A case illustration will also be provided to highlight population symptomology and possible interventions.

## 11.15 **COFFEE**

## 11.45 **Interventions in intergenerational child maltreatment**

### **Professor Ann Buchanan**

In advanced economies experiencing neither war nor calamity, large numbers of children continue to experience trauma and death often through the hands of their parents. This talk will demonstrate how cycles from within and outside the family result in child abuse, and how an understanding of these cycles helps in organising effective interventions. Examining the facts and fallacies, Ann Buchanan will suggest that in intergenerational child maltreatment, there may not be just one cycle, but four separate cycles: socio-political factors; recurring cultural patterns; psychological factors; and biological factors. Interventions need to be focused on each cycle independently to attempt to break the cycle of child maltreatment.

## 13.0 **LUNCH**

## 14.0 **The non-genetic transmission of trauma-induced violence down the generations**

### **Dr Felicity de Zulueta**

Dr Felicity de Zulueta will present attachment research relating to the transmission of the vulnerability to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) down the generations through the sensitisation of the next generation's hypothalamic-pituitary axis. Through historical and current examples, she will focus on the socio-cultural implications of these findings in terms of the affected individual and his or her community's propensity to violence. The latter is often bolstered by an underlying conceptual belief system developed to ensure both their psychological and physical survival.

## 15.0 **The conspiracy of silence and the transmission of trauma**

### **Dr Yael Danieli**

The conspiracy of silence that far too often follows trauma is the most prevalent and effective mechanism for the transmission of trauma on all dimensions. Both intrapsychically and interpersonally protective, silence is profoundly destructive, for it attests to the person's, family's, society's, community's, and nation's inability to integrate the trauma. They can find no words to narrate the trauma story and create a meaningful dialogue around it. This prevalence of a conspiracy of silence stands in sharp contrast to the widespread research findings that social support is perhaps the most important factor in coping with traumatic stress. We will examine the evidence in relation to survivors of the Nazi Holocaust.

**16.15 TEA**

**16.45 The forgotten and unforgotten victims: transgenerational trauma in the families of the perpetrators**

**Professor Gertrud Hardtmann**

National Socialism, and especially the Holocaust, left traces in the children of the victims and the perpetrators. Denial, splitting, projection and projective identification are characteristics of the perpetrators. The second generation were infected by their parents' resistance to remembering and to taking responsibility; they lived in a split, quasi-psychotic world of victims without perpetrators. Sometimes they became, projectively, the paranoid, feared persecutors of their parents. To recover, they needed positive and realistic objects outside the family with whom they could identify in order to work through shame and guilt and restore the reality and dignity of the victims.

**18.0 END OF DAY and de-briefing process group**

## Sunday 13 September 2009

**10.0 Intersubjectivity and analytic generosity in the treatment of intergenerational trauma**

**Elizabeth Corpt**

Analytic generosity, the analyst's use of the whole of her experience for the benefit of her patient, is of particular importance in work with intergenerational trauma. In the case presented, American philosopher Fingarette's concept of spelling-out, or the conscious action of turning oneself toward the knowing of something, is an important aspect of this inter-subjectively informed therapeutic work. We will consider how spelling-out can lead to a breakthrough in disrupting the cycle of trauma being passed from generation to generation, and what that involves.

**11.15 COFFEE**

**11.45 Understanding perversions as the outcome of intergenerational traumas**

**Dr Estela Welldon**

It is impossible to gain a complete understanding of psychopathological behaviour originating in the mother—baby unit without a knowledge of traumatic events in the mother's and maternal grandmother's early lives. In other words, in order to understand perversion as a clinical entity we must apply at least a three-generational approach which includes the importance on motherhood as the main source of power and control available to women. This intergenerational insight applies to both male and female perversions.

**13.0 LUNCH**

**14.0 From Intergenerational Trauma to Intergenerational Healing**

**Dr Aileen Alleyne**

The systematic dehumanization of African slaves was the initial trauma, and since that time, generations of their descendents have borne the scars. Black people of all cultural and

ethnic persuasions have not been spared the effects of this collective malady. British African Caribbeans as a member of this collective, have now to face the ever important challenge of knowing that real recovery from this ongoing trauma and its present day forms of racism, is to start from within. The nature of the work of intergenerational trauma is such that each group must first see to their own healing, because no group can do another's work. This session examines this challenge from a psychotherapeutic perspective.

## 15.15 TEA

### 15.45 MOVING FORWARDS – A WHOLE GROUP WORKSHOP

**Facilitators: Jane Ryan and Richard Hawkes**

How can we take the lessons from this conference to make a difference to people and communities suffering from intergenerational trauma? We will work together as a large group to explore where we are stuck, where we see possibility, and what actions we want to take as a result of being part of this event.

## 17.0 END OF CONFERENCE





# Speakers

**Dr Aileen Alleyne** is a UKCP registered psychotherapist, clinical supervisor and researcher. In addition to running her private practice in South London, she is a visiting lecturer at several training institutions and a consultant on issues of race and diversity within various workplace settings. Her clinical research, examining black workers' experiences in three institutional settings, makes a significant contribution to the discourse on race. Highlighting the concept of 'the internal oppressor', it offers ways of deepening understanding of black psychological reactions to the negative impact of racism. Aileen is the author of several book-chapters and articles, exploring themes on black/white dynamics, shame, and black identity wounding.

**Doris Brothers PhD** is a psychologist and psychoanalyst whose work is informed by self psychology and intersubjectivity theory. She is a co-founder and training and supervising analyst at The Training and Research Institute for Self Psychology (TRISP) in New York. Her books include *The Shattered Self: A Psychoanalytic Study of Trauma*, which was co-authored with Richard Ulman; *Falling Backwards: An Exploration of Trust and Self Experience*; and *Toward a Psychology of Uncertainty: Trauma-Centered Psychoanalysis*.

**Dr Brandon Hamber** is Director of INCORE, an associate site of the United Nations University based at the University of Ulster. He trained in S. Africa as a Clinical Psychologist. Prior to moving to Northern Ireland, he co-ordinated the Transition and Reconciliation Unit at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg. He has participated in peace initiatives, research projects and consultancies in Liberia, Mozambique, Bosnia, the Basque Country and Sierra Leone, among others. He has written extensively on truth commissions and the psychological implications of political violence. He has published some 40 book chapters and scientific journal articles, and is the author of *Transforming Societies after Political Violence: Truth, Reconciliation, and Mental Health*.

**Professor Ann Buchanan Ph.D, CQSW, AcSS**, is Director of the Centre for Research into Parenting and Children at University of Oxford. For the last 15 years her research at Oxford has focused on children at risk of social exclusion, including those at risk of child maltreatment. Much of her work has informed social policy and she is on the Council of the ESRC. Apart from many peer-reviewed journal papers and research reports, her books include *Children's Emotional Well-Being* (Ed. With Barbara L Hudson, 2000, Oxford University press), *Children Who Soil: Assessment and Treatment* (John Wiley & Sons, 1992), *Cycles of Child Maltreatment: Facts, Fallacies and Interventions* (1996: John Wiley & sons), *Parenting, Schooling and Children's Behaviour* (1998, Ashgate), *Partnership in Practice: the Children's Act of 1989* (Ashgate 1996).

**Elizabeth Corpt** is a practicing psychoanalyst in Arlington Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston/Cambridge. She is a supervising analyst and on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis, and a teaching associate and clinical supervisor at Harvard University, Department of Psychiatry, Cambridge Hospital Program for Psychotherapy.

**Dr. Yael Danieli** is a clinical psychologist in private practice, a victimologist, traumatologist, and the Director of the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children, which she co-founded in 1975. She has received several awards for her work, most recently, the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS). In 2008 she was appointed Advisor on Victims of Terrorism for the office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. She is also Distinguished Professor of International Psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Her books are *International responses to traumatic stress: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Fifty years and*

*beyond; Sharing the front line and the back hills* (Baywood) all published for and on behalf of the United Nations; *International handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma* (Kluwer/ Plenum); and *The trauma of terrorism: An international Handbook of sharing knowledge and shared care and On the Ground After September 11* [a finalist of Best Books 2005 Award of USA BookNews.com](Haworth Press).

**Françoise Davoine** and **Jean-Max Gaudillière** have worked as psychoanalysts at a public psychiatric hospital during thirty years, and in private practice. They are currently professors at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales in Paris and both have advanced degrees in classics (French, Latin and Greek literature) and doctorates in sociology. Jean-Max Gaudillière is an alumnus of the Ecole Normale Supérieure rue d'Ulm in Paris. Both were members of the Ecole Freudienne de Paris, until the death of Jacques Lacan (1981). They are supervisors and training analysts. They are members of the International Symposium for the Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia (US branch) created by Gaetano Benedetti.

**Dr Aaron Denham** is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University specializing in medical and psychological anthropology. He has researched and published on intergenerational trauma and resilience in a Coeur d'Alene Indian family and on the models and metaphors of mental health and healing in an Inuit community. His current research addresses family sentiments surrounding child morality in Northern Ghana and the role of divination in intergenerational relationships and meaning making. Dr. Denham advises various NGOs working in Africa, is an academic member of the Southwest Psychoanalytic Society, and a former child and family mental health counsellor.

**Professor Kimberly Frazier** is an Assistant Professor in Counsellor Education at Clemson University, South Carolina. Her research areas include culture-centred counselling and disaster training, and pediatric counselling of survivors of sexual abuse trauma.

**Dr Briana S. Nelson Goff, PhD, LCMFT**, is a professor of Marriage and Family Therapy in the School of Family Studies and Human Services and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Human Ecology at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA. She earned her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from Kansas State University and her doctorate from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA. Dr. Nelson Goff's clinical experience and research specialization is with primary and secondary traumatic stress symptoms in trauma survivor couples, families, and children, with specific focus on military and disaster related traumatic events.

**Dr Gertrud Hardtmann** is a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and Professor of Social Therapy at the Technical University Berlin. Her research has focused on intergenerational traumatization after the Nazi Holocaust with special reference to victims and perpetrators; social training and group therapy with right-wing radical German male teenagers.

**Isha McKenzie-Mavinga, PhD**, is an Integrative Transcultural Psychotherapist and writer. She set up therapeutic services at the African Caribbean Mental Health Association and group work with women impacted by violence in relationships. Isha is a senior lecturer at London Metropolitan University and teaches transcultural counselling at Goldsmiths College, The University of London. She has published several papers and a book based on her Doctoral study with trainee counsellors, *Black Issues in the Therapeutic Process* (2009).

**Dr Kami L. Schwerdtfeger, Ph.D., LMFT** is an Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy in the Department of Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, USA. She earned her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from Kansas State

University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA and her doctorate from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA. Dr. Schwerdtfeger's current research activities pertain to the effects of trauma on the transition to parenthood and the couple relationship.

**Professor Dr. Franz Ruppert** is Professor of Psychology at the University of Applied Sciences in Munich, Germany. His work is focused on psychotherapeutic work and specifically on the causes of severe mental illness. He has combined with this his interest in bonding and attachment theories and modern trauma work to understand better the effect of traumatic events, not just on those who suffer the event but on whole bonding systems, especially families. Ruppert facilitates workshops in Germany and many other countries, furthering his insights into the deeper transgenerational effects of trauma in different cultures, and researching the methodology of constellations to understand better its powerful effect on patients. [www.franz-ruppert.de](http://www.franz-ruppert.de)

**Dr Estela V. Welldon MD DSc (Hon) FRC PSYCH** is the Founder and Honorary Elected President for Life of the International Association for Forensic Psychotherapy; Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists; Honorary Doctor in Sciences Oxford Brookes University; Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy at Tavistock Portman NHS Clinics. She is a Member of the BAP, the CBP, IGA, AGP, IAGP and Honorary member of the Society of Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists, Tavistock Clinic. She works privately as a psychoanalytical psychotherapist. She is the author of *Madonna Whore, the Idealization and Denigration of Motherhood* (1988); *Sadomasochism* (2002) and main editor of *A Practical Guide to Forensic Psychotherapy* (1997).

**Dr Felicity de Zulueta** is a consultant psychiatrist in psychotherapy heading the Traumatic Stress Service in the Maudsley Hospital, London and an Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer in Traumatic Studies at the Institute of Psychiatry. Dr de Zulueta is also a Group Analyst and a Systemic Family Therapist whose main interests lie in the study of attachment, psychological trauma as well as bilingualism. She is author of *From Pain to Violence, the Traumatic Roots of Destructiveness*, (1993), Whurr: London, and many chapters on the subject. She is also a founding member of the International Attachment Network.



