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Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies

Presentation on Zoom

The Psychoanalytic Instrument: *Possibility, Form, and Risk*

Historically, psychoanalysis has underestimated, watered down, even denied the inherent risks of the clinical situation. This combustible arrangement invites the patient's passionate attachment and desire, with the abstinent analyst functioning as a deliberately incendiary human lure. That mortal vehicle is always vulnerable (analysts can die) as well as fallible (they can err). Paradoxically, the humanness of the analyst is not only a source of tragic potential but, at the same time, the method's fundamental engine.

As a means to understand why, and how, this clinical situation works, the paper explores Freud's beautiful brief essay "On Transience." Freud's phrase there – "scarcity value in time" – is at the heart of that engine, the power of the psychoanalytic form. Form limits and, at the same time, increases possibility for meaning. Examples, in addition to "On Transience," include a poem by Ben Jonson, Freud's classic narrative known as "fort-da," Winnicott's "set situation," and the clinical process itself.

2 CE Credits for Licensed Psychoanalysts and Social Workers

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2020 • 7:30 - 9:30 PM

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PRACTITIONERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC: \$40 | STUDENTS: Free



Ellen Pinsky, PsyD, came to psychoanalysis as a second profession following 25 years as a middle school English teacher. She says her experience in the classroom with 12- and 13-year-olds taught her most of what she needed to know to become a creditable clinician. About her book, *Death and Fallibility in the Psychoanalytic Encounter: Mortal Gifts* (Routledge, 2017), Thomas Ogden writes, "Mortal Gifts is a necessary book—necessary for analysts and necessary for the analyses they conduct. In it, Ellen Pinsky addresses a long-neglected issue in the practice of psychoanalysis: the analyst's failure to include in the very fiber of the analysis the fact of his or her mortality." She is on the faculty of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society & Institute, from which she graduated in 2006. In 2014 she was awarded BPSI's Deutsch Prize for her essay "The Olympian Delusion" (JAPA, 2011).

CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to (1) describe the paradox embedded in the analyst's humanness that makes risk inherent, (2) explain the relevance of Freud's phrase "scarcity value in time" to the efficacy of the clinical situation, and (3) explain how form limits, and at the same time increases, possibility for meaning.

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