



Joint IAAP/LAAP/ Vilnius university conference, 11-13 April 2025

The interplay between culture and psychotherapy: research and reflections

In today's globalized world, understanding the cultural dimension of human experience has become an important issue. Culture has a significant impact on an individual's belief system and relationship dynamics; it can shape emotional regulation and the process of making meaning. Relatedness to culture can be a resource for an individual's self-realization, but it can also restrict the development of a person's potential. Cultural trauma and its healing, the manifestation of cultural complexes, immigration and integration into other cultures - all these and other issues arise in the psychotherapeutic process and are part of professional training. Questions of cultural identity and the experience of encountering the *other* are sensitive issues. Engaging with difference and diversity at a deep level can be an enriching experience, but it can also be deeply disturbing when it challenges the values and beliefs of all those involved in the process. According to Analytical Psychology, even the ways of engaging with the unconscious depend on the cultural context in which an individual lives.

How do psychotherapists understand the role of culture in an individual's development and in their own psychotherapeutic practice? Is the concept of cultural identity still relevant in understanding the multidimensional therapeutic relationship? How can we recognize cultural complexes in contemporary times and how can we heal them? What issues emerge as the main elements of cultural responsiveness in growing multicultural societies? Reflecting on these and other questions would be important for a deeper understanding of the interplay between psychotherapy and culture in psychotherapy practice and training. A major aim of the planned conference is to provide a forum for psychotherapists and researchers to come together and reflect on the place of culture in psychotherapy practice in different cultural settings.

The international conference will be held at Vilnius University, which was founded in 1579 and is not only Lithuania's oldest and largest institution of higher education, but also a vibrant center of research and Lithuanian culture. The University is renowned for its research contributions and its diverse academic community, which provides a stimulating environment for scholarly discussion and networking.

The symbol of the straw garden, which we have chosen as the conference image, is an important heritage of ancient Lithuanian culture. It expresses the idea of the interconnectedness of all phenomena and a central organizing principle of the universe as the opposite of chaos. In 2023, the tradition of straw gardens was included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

We hope that the meetings at the joint IAAP/LAAP/Vilnius University conference will provide new insights and inspire participants to continue collaborating in the search for bridges between different cultures and analytical psychology, between research and psychotherapy.

Further information will be announced on the IAAP and LAAP websites.

