INTERACTION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS:
TRANSFERENCE, COUNTERTRANSFERENCE, AND ENACTMENT

G89.4585 — Fall, 2014

This seminar will explore the enacted dimension of analytic process, a continuously evolving second dimension of analytic treatment that exists alongside of and inextricably interwoven with the treatment’s verbal content. Within the enacted dimension, a new version of the patient’s early conflicts, traumas, and formative object relationships is inevitably created, without awareness or intent, in the here-and-now of the analytic engagement. Within the enacted dimension, repressed or dissociated aspects of the patient's past are not just remembered, they are re-lived. As the enacted dimension becomes conscious, it forms the basis for genuine and transforming experiential insight.

Thus, “enactment” is not simply an overt event but an unconscious, dynamically meaningful process that is continuously evolving within the transference-countertransference matrix. The seminar will trace the origins of the concept of the enacted dimension in the bedrock concepts of transference, countertransference, and repetition, and its relationship to such interactional concepts as projective identification, role responsiveness, and the analytic third. The realm of “interpsychic” interaction, which underlies the enacted dimension, will be distinguished from intersubjective and interpersonal interaction, and from the concept of co-creation. The relationship of the enacted dimension to analytic technique and to the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis will be discussed. Theoretical concepts will be illustrated via clinical vignettes from the literature and from those of the instructor and class participants.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: TRANSFERENCE, ACTING-OUT, AND REPETITION

The concepts of transference, acting-out, and repetition (the compulsion to repeat) were introduced together early in Freud’s writing. Weeks 1–3 attempt to sort out the insights and the ambiguities inherent in Freud’s seminal ideas about remembering and repeating in analytic process, and will trace how our understanding of the role of action in clinical process has evolved.

WEEK 1: In the Beginning: The Talking Cure and the Problem of Action

(Read only pp. 76–78 and 116–120.)


WEEK 2:  **Reconceptualizing the Role of Action in Analytic Process**


WEEK 3:  **The Enacted Dimension of Transference**


II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

*Freud introduced the concept of countertransference, but he wrote very little on the subject. In Week 4, the widening of Freud’s conception, and the debate surrounding it, is explored.*

WEEK 4:  **Countertransference in Freud’s Technique Papers**


*The “Classical” (or “Narrow”) and the “Totalistic” (or “Broad”) Conceptions of Countertransference*


III. FORERUNNERS: THE TRANSFERENCE-COUNTERTRANSFERENCE MATRIX

Object relations theories, psychoanalytic developmental theories, modern structural theory, and interpersonal theory have all tried to take formal theoretical account of the complex interactions that occur within the transference-countertransference relationship. Weeks 5 and 6 explore six concepts, from diverse theoretical perspectives, each of which deals with some aspect of the enacted dimension of clinical process.

WEEK 5: A. Projective Identification and Role Responsiveness


WEEK 6: B. Countertransference Structures, the New Object Relationship, Unconsciously Negotiated Resistance, and Transformation and Resisting Transformation


IV. ENACTMENT

Week 7 traces the emergence of the term of enactment, which has now been adopted by analysts of all theoretical schools and persuasions, and Week 8 considers the many varied, and sometimes problematic, ways the phenomenon has been conceptualized and applied clinically.

WEEK 7: The Emergence of a New Concept


WEEK 8: Uses and Misuses of the Concept


V. THE ENACTED DIMENSION OF ANALYTIC PROCESS

In all treatments, a new version of the patient’s early traumas, conflicts, and formative object relationships is inevitably created and brought to life, without awareness or intent, in the here-and-now of the analytic engagement. Weeks 9–11 explore this second dimension analytic process.

WEEK 9: What is the Enacted Dimension?


WEEK 10: Reliving Preverbal Experience in the Enacted Dimension


WEEK 11: Reliving Trauma in the Enacted Dimension


VI. INTERACTION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

All contemporary psychoanalytic schools formally address, and all practicing clinicians consider, the interactive aspects of analytic process. However, how “interaction” is defined is another matter. Week 12 focuses on the “interpsychic” realm of analytic process—the unconscious and preconscious transference–countertransference processes that underlie the enacted dimension of analytic process—and differentiates it from the concepts of intersubjectivity and co-creation.

WEEK 12: Interpsychic Interaction


VII. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ENACTED DIMENSION TO TECHNIQUE AND TO THE THERAPEUTIC ACTION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

The enacted dimension of analytic process occurs naturally and inevitably, without conscious awareness or intent. It is outside the domain of explicit technical interventions. Attention to these unintended, but dynamically meaningful and often elaborately developed characteristics of the treatment process furthers our understanding of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. Weeks 13 and 14 consider these aspects of the enacted dimension of analytic process.

WEEK 13: The Enacted Dimension and Analytic Technique


WEEK 14: What is Mutative? The Interplay of Insight and Experience


VIII. REVIEW AND INTEGRATION

WEEK 15: Frequently Asked Questions


At any point during the second half of the semester, we may choose to substitute/add any or all of the following sets of case presentations and discussions, as well as a clinical presentation by one or two class participants.

Clinical Case Presentations and Discussions


