

INDIVIDUATING THE PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPERIENCE: WOLSTEIN, FROMM, AND FERENCZI

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Overview

Course discussion and readings will focus on the evolving importance of “psychological individuation” as a therapeutic experience in psychoanalytic therapy. We will begin our study of this psychological experience with Sandor Ferenczi’s experimental efforts to develop a mutual, more emotionally open, and as a consequence more “individuated” psychoanalytic relationship. Next we will examine Erich Fromm’s theoretical and clinical efforts to differentiate the “individual” from limiting interpersonal, familial, and cultural influences. Then we will explore Benjamin Wolstein’s focus on “unique individuality” as direct experience, along with his view that an experience of “shared individuality” is one of the most therapeutic interpersonal interactions possible in clinical psychoanalysis. We will review a selection of readings from each psychoanalyst, clarify the relevance of their ideas for an individuated psychoanalysis, and develop our understanding of their practical application in the contemporary psychoanalytic practice.

Psychological Individuation as Therapeutic Experience

Class 1

The first class will focus on the different ways of defining psychological individuality and individuation, develop an understanding of individuation as an experience, and explore its therapeutic applications in psychoanalytic therapy. This class will also review the history of the concept, discuss the psychoanalytic theorists whose meta-psychologies and modes of practice limited the emergence of psychological individuation, as well as those theorists whose views and works promoted the emergence of individuation as an essential psychoanalytic experience.

Readings

No readings are assigned for the first class.

Class 2

In the second class, discussion will focus on further developing our understanding of individuation as a therapeutic experience in psychoanalysis. We will review the work of the three prominent psychoanalysts, Ferenczi, Fromm, and Wolstein, to illustrate the evolution of an “individuated” theory and practice. Our discussion will incorporate the introductory chapter of Jordan’s book on individuation, and two articles by Wolstein illustrating the perspective that “individuality,” as a focus of study and treatment, is as important as “relation” in psychoanalysis.

Readings

Jordan, Thomas (1999). Introduction. In *Individuation in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of Individuality in Interpersonal & Relational Theory & Practice*, Illinois, C.C. Thomas, 3-27.

Wolstein, B. (1993). The Lost Uniqueness of Kohut’s Self Psychology: An Instance of Narcissism. In *Narcissism and the Interpersonal Self*, ed. J. Fiscilini & A. L. Grey, New York, Columbia University Press, 107-129.

Wolstein, B. (1971). Interpersonal Relations without Individuality, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 8: 75-80.

Sandor Ferenczi - Experimenting with Mutual Individuation in the Psychoanalytic Relationship

Class 3

This class will explore the proposition that Sandor’s Ferenczi’s psychoanalytic “experiments” were the first systematic (secret) effort to “individuate” the psychoanalytic relationship. We will discuss the way in which Ferenczi’s attempts to “mutualize” the psychoanalytic experience encouraged the patient and analyst to directly experience and express their respective individualities in each other’s presence. Class discussion will be guided and informed by reading Ferenczi’s initial diary entries on the topic

of mutuality and mutual analysis, along with Judith Dupont's introduction to the *Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*.

Readings

Dupont, J. (1988). Introduction. In *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*, ed. J. Dupont, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 11-27.

Ferenczi, S. (1988). *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*, ed. J. Dupont, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, (mutual analysis & mutuality entries: 1-4, 10-13, 13-16, 28-29, 34-37, 37-38, 42-45, 46-48).

Class 4

The class will continue to discuss Ferenczi's experiments with "mutuality" and "mutual analysis" in his clinical diary, consider mutuality as a progressive "individuating" co-participation, and discuss its potential to increase the effectiveness of psychoanalytic therapy. The class will discuss the ways in which "psychoanalytic mutuality" can reduce resistance and defensiveness, and develop the openness, sharing, and spontaneity required to individuate the psychoanalytic relationship. The class will read the remaining mutuality and mutual analysis entries in Ferenczi's *Clinical Diary* and Wolstein's review of the diary.

Readings

Ferenczi, S. (1988). *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*, ed. J. Dupont, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, (mutual analysis & mutuality entries: 48-50, 56-57, 71-72, 73-76, 83-86, 129-131, 213-214).

Wolstein, B. (1989). Ferenczi, Freud, and the Origins of Interpersonal Relations: Review of *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 25: 672-685.

Class 5

This class will explore and deepen an understanding of the ways in which Ferenczi's focus on "psychoanalytic mutuality" broadened the psychoanalyst's approach to resistance and countertransference, as well as its influence on the evolution of interpersonal relations in psychoanalysis. To

facilitate our discussion the class will read two relevant and related articles by Benjamin Wolstein that review Ferenczi's clinical work with his patient RN, and explore Ferenczi's influence on American interpersonal relations.

Readings

Wolstein, B. (1992). Resistance interlocked with countertransference: R.N. and Ferenczi, and American interpersonal relations. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 28: 172-190.

Wolstein, B. (1993). Sandor Ferenczi and American Interpersonal Relations. In *The Legacy of Sandor Ferenczi*, ed. L. Aron & A. Harris. N.J., Analytic Press, Hillsdale, 175-183.

Erich Fromm - Differentiating Individuality from Social & Cultural Influences

Class 6

In this class we will develop an understanding of Fromm's theoretic and clinical emphasis on the "emergent individual" as a maturational experience. We will learn about Fromm's analysis of psychological individuation as a growth and therapeutic concept, and about the barriers and conflicts that can occur during the course of that emergence. The class will also discuss Fromm's understanding of the goal of psychoanalysis as "individuating" versus "adjusting" to external circumstances. Three selections of Fromm's original writings will provide the source material for class discussion.

Readings

Fromm, E. (1969). The Emergence of the Individual and the Ambiguity of Freedom: Chapter II. In *Escape From Freedom*, New York, Henry Holt, 23-38.

Fromm, E. (1950). The Psychoanalyst as "Physician of the Soul." In *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 65-98.

Fromm, E. (1959). The Limitations and Dangers of Psychology. In *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich*, ed. W. Leibrecht, New York, Books for Library Press, 31-36.

Class 7

This class will clarify and define Fromm's "individuating" clinical approach as depicted in one of two articles he wrote that focused primarily on psychoanalytic technique. The class will expand its understanding of Fromm's clinical work with a discussion of Lesser's and Schecter's articles presenting their understanding of Fromm's approach to patients, and describing their experience with him in clinical supervision. The class discussion will focus on Fromm's evolving formulation of psychoanalysis as an individuation experience.

Readings

Fromm, E. (2009). Factors Leading to Patient's Change in Analytic Treatment. In *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 39-56.

Lesser, R.M. (2009). "There Is Nothing Polite in Anybody's Unconscious." In *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 90-99.

Schecter, D.E. (2009). Awakening the Patient. In *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 73-78.

Class 8

This class will further define the "individuating" emphasis of Fromm's clinical approach as depicted in the second article he wrote that focused primarily on psychoanalytic technique. This article is particularly important in that it articulates Fromm's understanding of psychological individuality directly experienced and expressed, a theme that will be further developed in the work of Benjamin Wolstein. Class discussion will also incorporate Rainer Funk's and Leonard Feldstein's personal accounts of Fromm's own

individuality in his “presence” and “directness” as a supervisor and in his clinical work.

Readings

Fromm, E. (2009). Being Centrally Related to the Patient. In *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 7-37.

Funk, R. (2009). Direct Meeting. In *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 59-69.

Feldstein, L.C. (2009). Fromm’s Genius Was in His Actual Presence. In *The Clinical Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*, ed. R. Funk, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies, #9, New York, Rodopi, 169-170.

Benjamin Wolstein - Unique Individuality in Psychoanalytic Theory & Practice

Class 9

In this class we will familiarize ourselves with Benjamin Wolstein the person and psychoanalyst by reading and discussing an interview Irwin Hirsch conducted with Wolstein. A reference article by Sue Shapiro of all of Wolstein’s published works is included.

Readings

Hirsch, I. (2000). Interview with Benjamin Wolstein. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 36: 187-232.

Shapiro, Sue A. (2000). Publications of Benjamin Wolstein. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 36: 361-367, (reference article only).

Class 10

In this class we will learn about Wolstein's efforts to develop a "central" place for the "individual psyche" in psychoanalytic theory and practice supported by a clinical "psyche-ology." Influenced by his background in philosophy, Wolstein envisioned a "psychic center of self" or "I" as the indivisible fundament of a person. Wolstein's perspective includes an understanding of how the direct experience and expression of this central psyche is vital in psychoanalytic treatment and can be eclipsed or obscured by biological and/or social meta-psychologies of the mind.

Readings

Wolstein, B. (1971). The Psyche in Analysis. In *Human Psyche in Psychoanalysis*, Illinois, C.C. Thomas, 147-162.

Wolstein, B. (1974). Individuality and identity. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 10: 1-14.

Wolstein, B. (1974). "I" Processes and "me" patterns: Two aspects of the psychic self in transference and counter-transference. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 10: 347-357.

Class 11

In this class we will learn about and discuss Wolstein's concept of "unique individuality" clarifying its theoretical and therapeutic importance in clinical psychoanalysis. In addition the class will explore Wolstein's views on the therapeutic interpersonal experience that is possible when the experience of psychic uniqueness is "shared" in the psychoanalytic relationship. Two of Wolstein's papers describing the concept and experience will be the source material for our discussion.

Readings

Wolstein, B. (1975). Toward a Conception of Unique Individuality. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 11: 146-160.

Wolstein, B. (1977). On Sharing the Experience of Psychic Uniqueness. In *The Irrational in Psychoanalysis*, ed. G. Chrzanowski et al. Gottingen: Verlag f. Med. Psychologie, 204-216.

Class 12

In this class we will explore Wolstein's emphasis on "immediate experience" in psychoanalytic therapy, beyond the potential limitations of meta-psychology, as the context from which the unique individualities of its co-participants can risk emerging to consciousness and interaction. Readings for this class are focused on deepening our understanding of Wolstein's empiricist perspective in interpersonal psychoanalysis.

Readings

Wolstein, B. (1987). Anxiety and the Psychic Center of the Psychoanalytic Self. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 23: 631-658.

Wolstein, B. (1990). Five Empirical Psychoanalytic Methods. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 26: 237-256.

Wolstein, B. (1994). The Evolving Newness of Interpersonal Psychoanalysis: From the Vantage Point of Immediate Experience. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 30: 473-499.

Class 13

In this class we will supplement our understanding of Wolstein's unique psychoanalytic perspective with Jordan's unpublished manuscript of personal recollections and reflections on Wolstein as treating psychoanalyst and supervisor. We will also read and discuss Ben's last published article where he talks about co-participant (mutual) psychoanalysis as an ongoing development in psychoanalysis despite the interference from meta-psychologies as psychoanalytic beliefs.

Readings

Jordan, T. (2005). *Personal Reflections on the Therapeutic Mastery of Benjamin Wolstein*, unpublished manuscript, 1-44.

Wolstein, B. (1999). A Psychology of Unconscious Experience Without Interpretative Meta-psychology: Chapter 4. In *Storms in Her Head: New Perspectives on Breuer and Freud's Studies on Hysteria*, ed. M. Dimen & A. Harris. New York: The Other Press, 109-120.

Psychological Individuation in Contemporary Psychoanalytic Practice

Class 14

In this class we will discuss the ways in which the efficacy of a psychoanalytic practice can be increased by incorporating clinical experiences of psychological individuation. The class will read articles by John Fiscallini and Warren Wilner, two contemporary psychoanalysts influenced by Wolstein, who developed their own creative understanding of individuation as a therapeutic experience. Class discussion will compare and contrast Fiscallini's "singularity" with Wilner's "emergent unconscious awareness" as two examples of individuated experience in psychoanalysis. Clinical examples from personal practice experience will supplement and expand class discussion.

Readings

Fiscallini, J. (2004). Openness to Singularity: Chapter 10. In *Co-participant Psychoanalysis: Toward a New Theory of Clinical Inquiry*, New York, Columbia University Press, 155-168.

Wilner, W. (1999). The Un-Consciousing of Awareness in Psychoanalytic Therapy. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 35, 4, 617-628.

Class 15

In this last class, we will read and discuss Tom Jordan's views on the transformation from "unconscious to conscious individuality" as an experience generated in psychoanalytic therapy as a consequence of psychological individuation. Clinical examples from personal practice experience will supplement and expand class discussion.

Readings

Jordan, T. (1999). Individuation of Human Experience: Chapter 2. In *Individuation in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of Individuality in Interpersonal and Relational Theory and Practice*. Illinois, CC Thomas, 193-283.