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**


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**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


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 it’s 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


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


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


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


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


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


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 fundamen 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


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


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


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


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 Fiscalini 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 Fiscalini’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


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