

Psychoanalytic Field Theory and Clinical Process

Field theory describes a set of psychoanalytic perspectives that are based upon the essential intersubjective nature of the work we do. It does not describe a singular theory or coherent set of ideas, but has been referred to as a “metatheory” or a metaphoric construct (Lichtenberg, 2017). It attempts to address and elaborate the clinical experience of the co-created dyad in the consulting room, with its imaginative nonlinear, communicative and affective qualities that facilitate the emergence of meaning and change. Developed relatively independently in different parts of the world, the ideas and language of field theory have increasingly entered the international psychoanalytic discourse.

This class will explore the cultural contexts and foundational papers that anchor three contemporary versions of psychoanalytic field theory. We begin with Madeleine and Willy Baranger, working first in Argentina and then Uruguay in the 1950's, who are credited with introducing the field theory concept to psychoanalysis. We will then look at a group of psychoanalysts from Italy (i.e., Ferro, Civitarese) who have developed a theory and practice of field theory that is heavily influenced by Bion. Drawn by similarities in the emphasis on co-creation in the dyad, most recently the work of some North American psychoanalysts has been considered through a field theory lens (i.e., Ogden, Stern, Levenson, Atwood).

This class will look at these different versions of Field theory, which seem to engage similar phenomena but suggest differences in clinical practice. Participants will learn the vocabulary and conceptual frameworks used in field theory discourse, and the psychoanalytic techniques it suggests. Convergences in the engagement of a two person process, the centrality of both Ucs and the here and now of treatment, and the inherent creativity of the psychoanalytic situation will become apparent.

Controversy will be engaged about the place of field theory amongst the panoply of psychoanalytic models. We will consider together whether Field theory suggests a new model, or an umbrella to bring together multiple theories and approaches. We will discuss what it might add to the analyst's evolving clinical thinking, and what it may add to our work. Throughout the class we will consider the clinical applications and discuss how contemporary field theory integrates with more familiar relational perspectives, and how it suggests a vehicle for the transmission of culture into the unconscious play in the consulting room.

Lichtenberg, J. (2017). forward, In, Katz, S.M., Contemporary Psychoanalytic Field Theory: Stories, Dreams and Metaphor

Part I: Introduction and Latin American Field Theory

Class 1: The Field Concept in Psychoanalysis

Baranger, M., and Baranger, W. (1961/2008). The analytic situation as a dynamic field. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 89:795-826.

Ogden, T.H. (1994). The Analytic Third: Working with Intersubjective Clinical Facts. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 75:3-19

Class 2: Latin American Field Theory

Baranger, M., Baranger, W., Mom, J. (1983). Process and Non-Process in Analytic Work. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 64:1-15.

Leon de Bernardi, B., (2013). Metaphor, analytic field, and spiral process. In, Metaphor and Fields. Katz, M. (Ed) pp. 182 – 203.

Class 3: Clinical Process and Latin American Field Theory

Cassorla, R.M. (2005). From bastion to enactment: The 'non-dream' in the theater of analysis. *Int. J. Psychoanalysis*, 86(3):669-719

Zimmer, R. (2010). A View from the Field: Clinical Process and the Work of Confluence. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 79:1151-1165

PART II: Italian Field Theory

Class 4: Italy and Post-Bionian Field theory

Ferro, A. (1992). Two authors in search of characters: The relationship, the field, the story. *Rivista di Psicoanalisi*, 38:44-90.

Civitaresse, G. and Ferro, A. (2013). The meaning and use of metaphor in analytic field theory. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 33:190-209

Class 5: Italian Field Theorists and Practice/Technique

Civitaresse, G. (2016). The inaccessible unconscious and reverie as a path of figurability. In, Truth and the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis, Chapter 1, Routledge, London pp 7-24

Ferro, A. and Civitarese, G., (2015). Stone got eyes: on Bion's seminar in Paris. In, The Analytic Field and its Transformations, Chapter 2, Karnac, London, pp 29-42

Molinari, E. (2011). From one room to the other: A story of contamination. The relationship between child and adult analysis. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 92(4):791-810

Neri, C. (2013) Other fields within the analytic field. In, Metaphor and Fields. Katz, M. (Ed), pp 204 - 208

Class 6: Italian Field Theorists and Clinical Practice

Barahona, R. (anticipated 2020) The hallucinated field. (contribution to book in press, edited by Civitarese, G. and Levine, H.

Ferro, A. and Civitarese, G., (2016). Confrontation in the Bionian model of the analytic field. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*

Kancyper, L. (2009). Adolescence as a dynamic field. In,, The Analytic Field: A Clinical Concept, Ferro, A. and Basile, R. (Eds.), Chapter 4, Karnac, London, pp 81-106

Part III: North America and Field Theory

Class 7: Field Theory in North America

Peltz, R. and Goldberg, P. (2013). Field conditions: Discussion of Donnel B. Stern's field theory in psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 23:660-666

Stern, D. B. (2013) Field Theory in Psychoanalysis, Part 1: Harry Stack Sullivan and Madeleine and Willy Baranger. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 23:487-501.

Stolorow, R., Brandchaft, B., Atwood, G., (1995). Principles of psychoanalytic exploration. In, Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach, Analytic Press, New York pp 1 – 14.

Class 8: Summary and Interplay of Fields

Katz, S.M., (2017). The second model of psychoanalytic field theory. In, Contemporary Psychoanalytic Field Theory. Routledge, London and New York, Chapter 4, pp 34 – 49.

Ferro, A. and Civitarese, G., (2015). Analysts in search of an author: Voltaire or Artemisia Gentileschi? In, The Analytic Field and its Transformations. Karnac, London, pp.87-95.

Tubert-Oklander, J., (2016). Why a blog on field theory? Website: International Field Theory Association

Learning Objectives:

Class 1: This class will provide an overview of the field concept in psychoanalysis. Students will read the Baranger's foundational paper, and discuss the climate in which their field theory developed in South America. Students will read Ogden's work on the Third, and understand it as representing a field phenomena.

Class 2: Students will continue to learn the theoretical foundation and vocabulary of South American field theory, and its relation to other conceptualizations of South American psychoanalytic thought.

Class 3: Students will explore the clinical applications of the Baranger's work in authors whose work is influenced by field theory. The instructor and students will provide clinical material.

Class 4: Students will understand the origins of the Italian field theory model, and learn about its grounding in Bionian ideas.

Class 5: Students will study additional work of Italian (post-Bionian) field theory, understand its distinctive vocabulary, and explore its clinical application.

Class 6: This class will continue the focus on clinical technique of Italian field theory. Clinical material of the instructor and students will be included.

Class 7: Students will learn how the work of some important North American psychoanalysts can be seen through a field theory lens.

Class 8: Students will be able to discuss the potential utility of a unifying concept of field theory and the differences amongst field theories; and draw comparisons and contrasts between field theory and more familiar interpersonal, relational, intersubjectivist perspectives.