

Case Seminar: Countertransference in Working with Trauma  
Instructor: Nina Thomas

6 Fridays, March 27, April 3, 17, 24, May 1, 8, 2020  
11am-1:05 pm  
2373 Broadway, Apartment 1421

**Course description:**

Working with trauma in the consulting room presents a number of challenges for the analyst, not least being able to remain present to our patients in the face of the intense distress that occurs with recounting and re-experiencing traumatic events. This clinical case seminar will focus on the transference-countertransference engagements that occur in working with trauma particularly as the various states that may be experienced between therapist and patient become the re-enactment of the patient's (and analyst's) traumas.

The 6 sessions of the class will begin with a discussion of countertransference in our work with traumatized patients through the instructor's sharing her own work. Following the introductory session candidates will be asked to present their work with an eye toward how trauma themes emerge in the transference countertransference specifically around our own dissociations, the re-enactments that occur within sessions and outside of them, and the challenge to remain in "witness" (Eschel, 2013) with our patients.

Readings for each class are listed below. Even so, substitute or additional readings will be assigned as they are appropriate to the cases candidates present. In order to select the most relevant readings for candidates' specific concerns I ask that candidates prepare a brief (no more than one page) precis of their work and the issues they want to address.

## References

Eshel, A. (2013), Patient-Analyst "Witness": On Analytic "Presencing," Passion, and Compassion in States of Breakdown, Despair, and Deadness  
Psychoanalytic Quarterly, **82(4)**:925-963

### **Week One: March 27, 2020**

#### Introduction

#### Reading:

Thomas, NK (2013) "I've got you under my skin": Revenge as an attempt at affect regulation." Published as "*Ti sento sotto la pelle*". *La vendetta come regolazione affettiva*. In V. Caretti, G. Craparo, A. Schimmenti (a cura di), *Memorie traumatiche e mentalizzazione. Teoria, ricerca, clinica*. Astrolabio, Roma.

Itzkowitz, S. (2017). A dream as an internal enactment of trauma- The impact on the analyst's self. In J. Petrucelli, & S. Schoen (Eds.). *Unknowable, Unspeakable & Unsprung* (Chapter 15). NY: Routledge

### **Week Two: April 3, 2020**

#### **Withstanding the history of sexual abuse in women and girls, men and boys**

Pickles, J. (2007) *Alone Together: The Case of Judy and Ann*  
Psychoanalytic Inquiry, **27(2)**:106-124

Anonymous., 1990. Al's Story. In Hunter, M. *Abused boys: The neglected victims of Sexual Abuse*, pp. 189-191.

Anonymous, 1990. Allen's story. In Hunter, M. *Abused boys: The neglected victims of Sexual Abuse*, pp.193-202.

Anonymous, 1990. Daniel's story. In Hunter, M. *Abused boys: The neglected victims of Sexual Abuse*, pp. 203-210.

### **Week Three: April 17, 2020**

#### **Race in the consulting room**

Bennett, J.O. The analyst at the intersection of multiple cultures (2004).

Psychoanalytic perspectives, 3, pp. 55=63.

Hamer, F. M. (2006). Racism as a transference state: Episodes of racial hostility in the psychoanalytic context. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75(1):197-214

Suchet, M. A Relational encounter with race (2004) *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 14(4): 423–438.

### **Week Four: April 24, 2020**

#### **Political trauma**

Swartz, S. (2018) Counter-Recognition in Decolonial Struggle. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 28:520–527.

Doñas, VA, 2018. The undream: When the clinical (becomes?) Political.

*Psychoanalytic dialogues* 28(5):528-534

### **Week Five: May 1, 2020**

#### **Trauma in couples:**

Goldner, V. (2014). Romantic Bonds, Binds, and Ruptures: Couples on the Brink *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 24(4):402-418

### **Week Six: May 8, 2020**

#### **Immigration as trauma**

Boulanger, G. (2004). Lot's wife, Cary Grant, and the American dream: Psychoanalysis with immigrants. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 40(3):353-372

Boulanger, G. (2015). Seeing double, being double: Longing, belonging, recognition, and evasion in psychodynamic work with immigrants. *American journal of psychoanalysis*, 75 (3), 287-303.

**Objectives:**

1. Candidates will be able to identify the countertransference manifestations that are specific to the dyad they present.
2. Candidates will be able to describe the impact of the patient's trauma history on the process of particular analytic sessions.