

NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis

Course Title:

REFLECTING ON THE WORK OF PHILIP M. BROMBERG

Instructors:

Anthony Bass, Ph.D.

Jessica Benjamin, Ph.D.

Velleda Ceccoli, Ph.D.

Jack Drescher, MD

Adrienne Harris, Ph.D.

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Jean Petrucelli, Ph.D., CEDS

Donnel Stern, Ph.D.

Cleonie White, Ph.D.

Overview:

Over the past several decades, Philip M. Bromberg's vast and immeasurable contributions to the field of psychoanalysis has left an indelible mark on the minds of many. This course aims to reflect on some of Bromberg's seminal writings as he provided us with a language of multiplicity, dissociation, and self-states, as a way to understand the role of shame-laden developmental trauma that impairs relatedness. Philip wrote extensively about mental development and the patient/therapist relationship with a focus on the mutual impact of people with the understanding that the nature of the analytic relationship with any patient involves working with trauma and dissociation as an inherent part of it. He had a deep appreciation of the private domains of experience, the hidden places where personal existence was preserved and his work both presented and created an interpersonal/relational point of view that emphasized self-organization, states of consciousness, dissociation, enactment, and multiple self-states.

Philip was first and foremost an interpersonal psychoanalyst, focusing on the here-and-now moments and making clinically appropriate use of them, with a forthrightness in what he conveyed. His interests in the various forms of human relatedness as the sources of therapeutic action inspired us to understand the central role of dissociation of both the adaptive and maladaptive kind. Philip's writings and teachings on developmental trauma, dissociation, enactment, multiplicity of self-states, and the process of growth and healing have influenced generations of clinicians throughout the world and is now a key element in contemporary analytic discourse.

This class is an Inter-track offering between the IH, Relational, and Independent tracks which speaks to the universality and reach of Philip's ideas across platforms. Philip believed that the entire face of psychoanalysis was evolving, and in terms of the overall form of the evolution, each school of thought will be different from what it has been in order to survive, but each will still be recognizably different from one another in the same ways each has always been. Philip had a wait and see attitude about whether barriers would truly come down, and he was not even sure *how far* he said he would want them to as he believed that one is always most creative with something to push against.

During his professional life, with his prime contributions to our interpersonal/relational field, Philip awakened the dreamer-- and more-- in many of us, as he illuminated the importance of "minding the gap", helping us witness "the shadow of the tsunami" of loss, and guiding us as we navigated "potholes in the royal road. In a 2013 interview, 7 years before his passing, with the editors of the journal *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, Philip was asked what he would like his psychoanalytic legacy to be. This is what he answered,

"That most of the people with whom I have worked in one way or another, feel more whole as human beings as a result of our connection. But I also hope that these people, including those who are analytic authors, have benefited enough from what they experienced to feel my presence in the continuity in their own evolution, and in a manner that allows my contribution to be passed on through theirs. In other words, I don't have much faith that the legacy of anybody in this field who writes, including me, is going to endure in itself. Ideas fade away and new things replace them. I'd love it, of course, if my work had a longer shelf life than average, but who knows? So, what really matters is whether the connections that take place between myself and others makes what I stand for valuable enough to be passed on in some way."

We hope to pass on Philip's ideas and the felt experience of his work through his writings. This course is divided into ten classes, and will be held on ZOOM, with the first and the last taught by Jean Petrucelli and Velleda Ceccoli, who together created this seminar. Each class will highlight one of Philip's writings.

Meeting Time:

Each class is 1 hour 15 minutes to be held on Friday's 10:45-12 starting February 4th - April 8th and will be held on ZOOM.

Class #1 February 4th 10:45-12

Instructors: Jean Petrucelli, Ph.D., CEDS and Velleda Ceccoli, Ph.D.

This class establishes the context and beginning of Bromberg's ideas regarding psychoanalysis as a method, theory, and system for training clinicians. Within that

context, his first published paper addresses the gap in Sullivanian theory and the need to integrate the concept of regression to address the area of nonverbal communication in treatment and its importance.

Required Readings:

Bromberg, P.M. (1974). On Psychoanalytic Training—Introduction: The Challenge of Self-Examination. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 10:239-241.

Bromberg, P.M. (1979). Interpersonal Psychoanalysis and Regression. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 15:647-655.

Course objective: To establish the background for Bromberg’s ideas regarding Interpersonal theory and the necessary infusion of the school of British object relations.

Class #2 February 11th 10:45-12 (Velleda)

Instructors: Anthony Bass, Ph.D. & Cleonie White, Ph.D.

This class reexamines the conceptualization of psychoanalytic listening and technique as therapeutically mediating the lifting of repression and the resolution of intrapsychic conflict in terms of new types of questions having to do with such concepts as “self-organization,” “states of consciousness,” and “dissociation,” and explores the view that dissociation is as basic as repression to human mental functioning and as central to the stability and growth of personality.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P.M. (1991) On Knowing One’s Patient Inside Out: The Aesthetics of Unconscious Communication. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 1 (4) 399-422.

Course objective: To clarify the important theoretical differences of the relational turn and its impact and reformulation of the unconscious and the self.

Class #3 Friday, February 18th 10:45-12 (Jean)

Instructor: Jack Drescher, MD

This class focuses on the implications of mind as nonlinear and the basic unit of consciousness – the self – as being multiply determined from the beginning holding the view that dissociation is as basic as repression to human mental functioning and as central to the stability and growth of personality.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P. (1994) "Speak! that I may see you": Some reflections on dissociation, reality, and psychoanalytic listening. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 4:517-547.

Course Objective: At the end of this class, the participant will be able to demonstrate how dissociation is as basic as repression to human mental functioning and central to the stability and growth of personality.

Class #4 Friday, February 25th 10:45-12 (Velleda)

Instructor: Shelly Itzkowitz, Ph.D.

This class explores the question of what sustains a person's motivation for analytic treatment and maybe the essence of human nature? Is it the fact that the human personality possesses the extraordinary capacity to negotiate continuity and change *simultaneously*, and will do so under the right relational conditions?

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P. (1996) Standing in the spaces: The Multiplicity of Self and the Psychoanalytic Relationship. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 32: 509-535.

Course Objective: Participants will understand the difference between dissociation as process and dissociation as structure, the impact of traumatic dissociation on self-experience, and how dissociation contributes to enactments.

Class #5 Friday, March 4th 10:45-12

Jean Petrucelli, Ph.D., CEDS

This class explores how desire has gone haywire in that the central issue for a patient with an eating disorder is that she is at the mercy of her own physiologic and affective states because she lacks an experience of human relatedness and its potential for reparation that mediates self-regulation due to traumatic dysregulation of affect. The inevitability of the analyst's own dissociative reactions in response to the patient's internal war over desire and control, and the different types of interpersonal enactments into which an analyst is drawn in will be demonstrated through the use of clinical vignettes.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P.M. (2001). Treating Patients with Symptoms—and Symptoms with Patience: Reflections on Shame, Dissociation, and Eating Disorders. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11(6) 891-912.

Course objective: Describe the concept of dissociation and at least one dimension of the theory related to its use in the work with patients with eating disorders as their capacities to self soothe and regulate internal experience are fraught with trauma responses, dysregulated affective states, feelings of shame and betrayal.

Class # 6 Friday March 11th 10:45-12 (Velleda)

Adrienne Harris, Ph.D.

This class focuses on the impact of psychic trauma when it exceeds the threshold for cognitive processing and flood the mind with unintegratable affect that threatens to disorganize the internal template on which one's experience of self-coherence, self-cohesiveness, and self-continuity depends utilizing a detailed clinical vignette.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P.M. (2003). One need not be a house to be haunted: On enactment, dissociation, and the dread of “not-me” — A case study. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 13(5):689-709.

Course objective: Through this extended clinical example candidates will understand the psychic consequences of overwhelming affect on the self and the role of dissociation in maintaining self-coherence.

Class # 7

Donnel Stern, Ph.D. Friday March 18th 10:45-12 (Jean)

This class focuses on the impact of trauma and the transformative nature of the psychoanalytic relationship.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P.M. (2008). Shrinking the Tsunami. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 44(3):329-35.

Course objective: Participants in this reading group will be able to use the conceptualization of structuralized dissociation in their clinical practice, define dissociation and why it is the primary defensive operation, and will understand the relationship in clinical practice of dissociation and enactment.

Class # 8

Jessica Benjamin, Ph.D. Friday March 25th 10:45-12 (Velleda)

This class focuses on the integration of affect regulation theory with trauma theory.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P. (2011) Mentalize This!. Ch. 3 in *The Shadow of the Tsunami and the Growth of the Relational Mind*.

Course objective: Participants will have an understanding of how affect regulation theory has been applied to the clinical situation.

Class # 9 Friday April 1st 10:45-12

Velleda Ceccoli, Ph.D.

What was it that kept Dr Sullivan from being able to address that “area of raw affect” which he knew should be analyzed? Bromberg hypothesizes that it was Harry’s trauma that kept Dr. Sullivan from fully elaborating his interpersonal theory.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P.M. (2014.) Sullivan as Pragmatic Visionary: Operationalist and OperRelationalist, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 50:4, 509-530.

Course objective: Through the use of Sullivan as a case example, candidates will be able to understand first-hand how personal trauma can shut down access to important parts of the self.

Class # 10 Friday, April 8th 10:45-12

Velleda Ceccoli, Ph.D. & Jean Petrucelli, Ph.D., CEDS

This class will focus on summarizing Bromberg’s contributions to the field of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

Required Reading:

Bromberg, P. M. (2017), *Psychotherapy as the Growth of Wholeness: The Negotiation of Individuality and Otherness*. In: M. Solomon & D. Siegel, Eds. *How People Change*. New York: Norton, pp. 17-52.

Course objective: In summarizing the clinical and theoretical contributions of Philip M. Bromberg, students will be able to understand the important shifts that have taken place regarding what is involved in helping people change.