

Transference, Counter-Transference and their Relationship to Therapeutic Action in Psychoanalysis

ATP II, Spring 2016

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“Without ... transference – of the intensity of the unconscious, of the infantile ways of experiencing life that have no language and little organization, but the indestructability and power of the origins of life – to the preconscious and to the present day life and contemporary objects – without such transference, or to the extent to which transference miscarries, human life becomes sterile and an empty shell.

... There is neither such a thing as reality nor a real relationship without transference. Any “real relationship” involves transfer of unconscious images to present day objects. In fact, present day objects are objects, and thus real, in the full sense of the work only to the extent to which this transference ... is realized.”

Hans Loewald (1960)

Transference is a central concept in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. In this course, we will examine the concept of transference from its historical beginnings to its present elaborations. We will explore the usefulness of working with transference for understanding the past and helping to create therapeutic change in the present. We will look at different kinds of transferences and different ways of working with transference. We will also consider the relationship between transference and countertransference, touching on related concepts of projective identification, role responsiveness, enactment, the therapist’s use of reverie, and the question of therapist self disclosure.

Throughout this course we will draw on clinical examples, from the literature and from our own work, to enrich and enliven our understanding. As fundamental psychoanalytic concepts, transference and countertransference are closely tied to the question of what constitutes therapeutic action, that is, how do we best achieve needed improvements in our patients? The class is encouraged to bring in brief vignettes with this question in mind: how do I recognize the presence of transference and its nature?

Syllabus

Week 1 – March 24 - Freud’s discovery of Transference

Freud, S. (1895) Studies on Hysteria. S. E., 2: 301-303. [in the chapter The Psychotherapy of Hysteria by Freud] [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1905) Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria. S. E., 7: 112-122, Postscript. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1912) The Dynamics of Transference. S. E., 12: 99-108. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: The first two of these readings are Freud's earliest concise descriptions of the phenomenon of transference and the third elaborates his observations. Together they describe how Freud made the leap *from* transference as an impediment to teaching the patient about their neurosis *to* recognizing that the transference provides a lived repetition of the original conflict that created the patient's disturbance and an essential aspect for understanding and transforming neurotic symptoms.

Learning objective for this session: The participants will be able to describe the nature of transference, the origin of transference in early life, and the double aspect of transference as resistance to change and a means to change, all as these were conceptualized by Freud.

Week 2 – March 31- further development of Freud's ideas about transference

Freud, S. (1914) Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through. *S. E.*, 12: 147-156. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1915) Observations on Transference Love. *S. E.*, 12: 159-171. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional: Abend, S. (2009) Freud, Transference, and Therapeutic Action. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 78(3): 871-892. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: These two readings bring a full description of the transference as reflecting a "new edition" in the present of the original neurosis, providing the means to resolve forgotten trauma and repressed conflicts. The therapist must largely allow the transference the freedom to emerge unchallenged, in its fullness of affect, to be gradually understood/interpreted with the patient.

Learning objective for this session: The participants will be able to provide a detailed description of Freud's understanding of the transference as a repetition within the treatment that can and must be used therapeutically toward resolution of unconscious conflicts.

Week 3 – April 7 - The central role of transference in ego psychology

Bird, B. (1972) Notes on Transference: Universal Phenomenon and Hardest Part of Analysis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 20: pp. 267-301. [PEP Web Link](#)

Loewald (1971) Transference neurosis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 19:54-66. [PEP Web Link](#)

Arlow, J.A. (2002). Transference as Defense. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 50:1139-1150. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: These papers offer a deepened understanding of the mental capacity to form transferences and specifically the *transference neurosis*, the required deep involvement of the analyst/therapist in the emergence of the transference neurosis, and thus the centrality of the countertransference. Bird further considers the tendency to focus on

libidinal aspects of the transference at the expense of aggressive aspects that often appear in the form of seemingly intractable resistances. Both Loewald and Bird also introduces a distinction between the transference neurosis, 'ordinary' and automatic transference reactions, and reactions based in 'reality' – a distinction that continues to haunt and confuse. Finally, we will consider the ways that transference also serves as a defense, "transference defense."

Learning objective for this session: The participants will be able to define 'transference neurosis' and describe how it is conceptualized as distinct from transference reactions characteristic of all human relationships (including also the therapy relationship).

Week 4 – April 14 - The transference use of the analyst

Little, M. (1951) CounterTransference and the Patient's Response to It. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 32: 32-40. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D. W. (1969) The Use of An Object. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 50: 711-716. [PEP Web Link](#)

Sandler, J. (1976) Counter-transference and Role-Responsiveness. *International Review of PsychoAnalysis*, 3: 43-47. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: The central themes of this weeks relatively brief readings are 1) the unavoidable involvement of the therapist's psyche (including his/her own transferences) and the impact on the patient; and 2) how the patient experiences and uses the therapist developmentally (in contrast to predominantly as an interpreter) to achieve greater self differentiation, relying on the therapist's capacity to respond at the developmental and emotional level required by the patient.

Learning objective for this session: The participants will be able to discuss the forms transferences take when working with patients who are functioning (whether consistently or transiently) at pre-oedipal levels.

Week 5 – April 21 - Countertransference

Tower, L (1956) Countertransference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4: 224-255. [PEP Web Link](#)

OR

Greenberg, J. (1991) Countertransference and Reality. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 1:52-73. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Our readings move away from viewing countertransference as "analyst's blind spot," and something to eradicate, to viewing countertransference as transference in the analyst. This perspective also brings attention to the "real" analyst as a source of patient's phantasies and associations.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe a difference between old views on countertransference as a hindrance to psychoanalytic discourse and modern

views - transference in the analyst – which, together with the patient’s transference, creates a combined dynamic unconscious.

Week 6 – April 28 - Self psychological views of transference

Winnicott, D. W. (1956) On Transference. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 37: 386-388. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ornstein, A (1990). Chapter 5: Selfobject Transferences and the Process of Working Through. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 6:41-58. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ornstein, P (2015) Revisiting the Negative Therapeutic Reaction: An Example of Comparative Psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 10:118-127.

[Available in [Library](#)]

Main topic for discussion: Self-object transference is concerned with the patient’s moment-to-moment self-experience. Self-object transference is established in response to deficits and developmental arrests rather than intrapsychic conflicts.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe self-object transferences in analytic and other relationships as well as different ways of working with these transferences and the related defenses.

Week 7 – May 5 - Klein, neo-Kleinians and Bion

Joseph, B. (1985) Transference: The Total Situation. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 66: 447-454. [PEP Web Link](#)

Brown, L.J. (2010) Klein, Bion, and Intersubjectivity: Becoming, Transforming, and Dreaming. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 20:669-682. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Transference as a total situation is an actualized living experience of the patient in analysis. Analyst and patient co-create a narrative based on a notion of a shared unconscious phantasy.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe a meaning of a transference as a total situation and differentiate object relational approach to transference from an ego-psychological one.

Week 8 – May 12 - Transference and countertransference as shared enactment

McLaughlin, J.T. (1991) Clinical and Theoretical Aspects of Enactment. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 39: 595-614. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper, S.H. (2004) State of the Hope: The new bad object in the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 14:527-551. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Analytic enactments are viewed as events occurring within the psychoanalytic dyad that both parties experience as being the consequence of behavior in the other.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe an evolving transformation of the concept of enactment from viewing it as “misbehavior” on the patient’s or analyst’s part to viewing it as inevitable co-creation of the analytic dyad.

Week 9 – May 19 - Mutual involvement in therapeutic process (moving to intersubjectivity)

Jacobs, T. (1996) Analysis, Mutual Analysis, and Self Analysis: On the Interplay of Minds in the Analytic Process. *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 4: 255-277. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper (2010) An Elusive Aspect of the Analyst's Relationship to Transference. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 79:49-380. [PEP Web Link](#)

Brown, L. J. (2009) Bion’s Ego Psychology: Implications for an Intersubjective View of Psychic Structure. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 78: 27-55. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Analytic material emerges from interplay between the minds of patient and analyst. Analysts have different reactions to being their patients’ transference objects. The analyst’s relationship (transference) to analytic theory may play a significant role in that reaction. Self-analysis and working through in the analyst plays an important role in the therapeutic action of analytic treatment.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe how analysts deal with being THE object of patient’s transference, and the role self-analysis and working through in the analyst plays in modern psychoanalytic treatment.

Week 10 – May 26 - Intersubjective perspectives on Erotic Transference/ Countertransference

Davies, J.L. (1994) Love in the Afternoon: A Relational Reconsideration of Desire and Dread in the Countertransference. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 4(2), 153-170. [PEP Web Link](#)

Gabbard, G. (1994) Commentary on papers by Tansey, Hirsh, and Davies. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 4:203-213. [PEP Web Link](#)

Davies, J.M. (1994) Desire and Dread in the Analyst: Reply to Glen Gabbard’s Commentary on “Love in the Afternoon.” *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 4:503-508. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: These articles provide a fascinating dialogue about sources of and handling of powerful countertransferences, particularly erotic feelings, and whether self-disclosure is useful.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to discuss the origin of erotic countertransference within the therapy dyad and will be able to think critically about the function of self-disclosure.

Further Optional Reading:

Brenner, C. (1979) Working Alliance, Therapeutic Alliance, and Transference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 27(5): 1371-57. [PEP Web Link](#)

Canestri, J. (1993). A cry of fire: some considerations on transference love. In: E.S. Person (ed.), *On Freud's "Observations on Transference Love."* Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 146-154. [Available in [Library](#)]

Cooper, A. (1987) Changes in Psychoanalytic Ideas: Transference Interpretation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 35: 99-118. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper, A. (1988) Our Changing Views of the Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalysis: Comparing Strachey and Loewald. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 58: 15-27. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ferenczi, S. (1949) Confusion of Tongues Between the Adult and the Child (The Language of Tenderness and of Passion). *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 30: 225-230. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1910) Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis. *S. E.*, 11: 49-55. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ferro, A. (2002) Some Implications of Bion's Thought: The Waking Dream and Narrative Derivatives. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 83 (3): 597-607. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ferro, A. (2006) Clinical Implications of Bion's Thought. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 87 (4): 989-1003. [PEP Web Link](#)

Loewald, H. (1975) Psychoanalysis as an Art and the Fantasy Character of the Psychoanalytic Situation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 23:277-299. [PEP Web Link](#)

Loewald, H. (1960) On the Therapeutic Action of Psycho-Analysis. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 41:16-33. [PEP Web Link](#)

McLaughlin, J.T. (1987) The Play of Transference: Some Reflections on Enactment in the Psychoanalytic Situation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 35:557- 582. [PEP Web Link](#)

McLaughlin, J.T., (1981) Transference, Psychic Reality, and Countertransference. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 50: 639-664. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ogden, T. (1994) Analyzing the matrix of the transference-countertransference. In: *Subjects of Analysis*. Jason Aronson, Inc.: Northvale, NJ. [Available in [Library](#)]

Ogden, T. (2005) Forward to Ferro, A., The genesis of suffering and the role of psychoanalysis. In: Dana Birksted-Breen (ed.), *The New Library of Psychoanalysis: Seeds of Illness, Seeds of Recovery*. Bruner Routledge, NY, i-xxiii. [Available in [Library](#)]

Stern, D., Sander, L., Nahum, J., Harrison, A., Lyons-Ruth, K., Morgan, A., Bruschiweiler Stern, N., Tronick, E. (1998) Non-Interpretive Mechanisms in Psychoanalytic Therapy: The "Something More" Than Interpretation. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(5): 903-921. [PEP Web Link](#)

Tessman, L. H. (1999) A cry of fire, an old flame, and the matter of the fireplace. In D. Bassin (ed.), *Female Sexuality: Contemporary Engagements*. Jason Aronson, Inc., NJ, 33-48. [Available in [Library](#)]

Tolpin, M. (2002) Chapter 11, Psychoanalysis of Normal Development: Forward edge transferences. *Progress in Self Psychology*. 18: 167-190. [PEP Web Link](#)

Westen, D., Gabbard, G. (2002) Developments in Cognitive Neuroscience II: Implications for Theories of Transference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50 (1), 99-134. [PEP Web Link](#)

Whitebook, J. (2002) Psychoanalysis and "The Disenchantment of the World." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50: 1197-1217. [PEP Web Link](#)