



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

ATP II, Spring 2019

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"... 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 word only to the extent to which this transference ... is realized.

"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."

Hans Leowald (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. *In Week 3, we will offer an initial presentation of a case to apply Freud's ideas about transference. In subsequent sessions of the seminar we will reexamine clinical process material from this case using different clinical theoretical perspectives on transference.*

As fundamental psychoanalytic concepts, transference and countertransference are closely tied to the question of what constitutes therapeutic action, that is, how do we best help our patients achieve growth and change? We will be examining the place of transference and countertransference and how they are used technically in multiple theoretical perspectives.

The class is also encouraged to bring in brief vignettes with these questions in mind: how do I recognize the presence of transference or countertransference in this material? What is its current character? How can this understanding be used to deepen the work?

Syllabus

Week 1 - March 21 - Freud's discovery of Transference

- 1) Freud, S. (1905). Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria. *S. E. VII*, 112-122, Postscript. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Freud, S. (1914). Remembering, repeating, and working through. *S. E. XII*, 147-156. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: The first of these readings is Freud's earliest concise description of the phenomenon of transference and the second 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 as a lived repetition of original experiences that created the patient's disturbance that provides an essential element for understanding and transforming neurotic symptoms.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to describe the nature of transference as described by Freud, the origin of transference in early life, and the double aspect of transference as both an obstacle to change and a means to change.

Week 2 - March 28 - Further development of Freud's ideas about transference

- 1) Leowald, H.W. (1971). The transference neurosis: Comments on the concept and phenomenon. *JAPA*, 19, 54-66. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Gabbard, G. (2000). What can neuroscience teach us about transference? *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9(1), 1-18. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: These two readings, almost 30 years apart, bring a fuller description of transference as reflecting a “new edition” in the present of an original situation of conflict, providing the means to resolve forgotten trauma and repressed conflicts. The therapist must largely allow the transference the freedom to emerge unchallenged in the treatment, and with fullness of affect, to be gradually understood/interpreted with the patient.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to provide a detailed description of Freud’s understanding of transference (and more specifically transference neurosis) as a repetition within the treatment that is initially visible “in action,” but gradually can become understood as an emotionally charged “memory” leading to resolution of unconscious conflicts.

No Class - April 4 - Academic Lecture

Week 3 - April 11 - The central role of transference in ego psychology

- 1) Bird, B. (1972). Notes on transference: Universal phenomenon and hardest part of analysis. *JAPA*, 20, 267-301. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: This paper offers a deepened understanding of the mental capacity to form transferences and specifically the *transference neurosis*, the required deep involvement of the 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. Bird, like Leowald, also draws a distinction between ‘ordinary’/ automatic transference reactions, the transference neurosis, and reactions based in ‘reality’ – a distinction that continues to haunt and confuse.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to define ‘transference neurosis,’ conceptualized as distinct from the transference reactions characteristic of all human relationships, and be able to discuss the roots of the neurosis in early conflicts about both love and aggression.

Week 4 - April 18 - Self psychological views of transference and entering the patient’ experience

- 1) Kohut, H. (1987). Building psychic structure that regulates self-esteem *and* The admiring self-object and the idealized self-object. In Miriam Elson (Ed.), *The Kohut seminars* (Chapters 5 & 6, pp. 61-94). NY: W. W. Norton & Co. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bps.org.]
- 2) Ornstein, A. (1990). Chapter 5: Selfobject transferences and the process of working through. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 6, 41-58. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Self-object transferences are concerned with the patient's moment-to-moment self-experience. Persistent self-object transferences are established in response to deficits and developmental arrests rather than intrapsychic conflicts (though both may be evident in a treatment).

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the 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 5 - April 25 - Countertransference as central concept and focus of controversy

- 1) Schwaber, E. A. (1992). Countertransference: The analyst's retreat from the patient's vantage point. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 73, 349-361. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Fosshage, J. (1995). Countertransference as the analyst's experience of the analysand: Influence of listening perspectives. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 12(3), 375-391. [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 inevitable transferences of the analyst within the dyad arising both from the therapist's internal world and in response to the patient. This perspective also brings attention to the "real" analyst as a source of patient's phantasies and associations.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to describe a difference between old views on countertransference as a hindrance to psychoanalytic discourse and modern views of transference in the analyst – which, together with the patient's transference, allows for the emergence of a combined dynamic unconscious.

Week 6 - May 2 - Other developmental perspectives on the capacity to form and use transference

- 1) Winnicott, D. W. (1969). The use of an object. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 50, 711-716. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Alvarez, A. (2010). Levels of analytic work and levels of pathology: The work of calibration. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 91(4), 859-878. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: The central theme of this week's readings is 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: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to describe how a range of developmental needs may become evident within the transference/countertransference matrix at different times and discuss how the therapist can recognize and respond to these needs while maintaining the treatment frame.

Week 7 - May 9 - Neo-Kleinians

- 1) Joseph, B. (1987/1989). Projective identification: Some clinical aspects. In Feldman, M. & Spillius, E. B. (Eds.), *Psychic equilibrium and psychic change* (Chapter 12, pp. 168-180). [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]
- 3) Brown, L. J. (2010). Klein, Bion, and intersubjectivity: Becoming, transforming, and dreaming. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 20(6), 669-682. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: Contemporary object relations theory posits that the analyst and the patient co-create a narrative based on a notion of a shared unconscious phantasy.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session participants will be able to describe the concepts of projection/introjection as used within contemporary Kleinian theory and the creation of an intersubjective field, and will be able to apply these concepts to a clinical situation.

Week 8 - May 16 - Mutual contributions to the therapeutic process

- 1) McLaughlin, J.T. (1991). Clinical and theoretical aspects of enactment. *JAPA*, 39, 595-614. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Bonovitz, C. (2005). Locating culture in the psychic field: Transference and countertransference as cultural products. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 41(1), 55-75. [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. 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 and to the larger culture may play a significant role in that reaction.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session participants will be able to describe the evolving understanding 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, and will be able to describe the role played by self-analysis in modern psychoanalytic treatment.

Week 9 – May 23 - Transference and countertransference in work with patients who suffered early trauma

1) Davies, J. & Frawley, M.G. (1994). In *Treating the adult survivor of childhood abuse: A psychoanalytic perspective* (Chapter 7, pp. 129-148 & Chapter 9, pp. 167-185). NY: Basic Books. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bps.org.]

Optional but highly recommended:

Bromberg, P. (1996). Standing in the spaces: The multiplicity of self and the psychoanalytic relationship. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 32, 509-535. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: We will examine the impact of early trauma on a person's defensive adaptations (e.g., dissociation, splitting, denial) and internal object relations and explore how these developmental disruptions become manifest in the transference/countertransference milieu of the therapy.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session participants will be able to discuss the ways that transference and countertransference are altered when an individual has suffered early trauma that disrupts/distorts internalized object relations.

Week 10 - May 30 - Erotic Transference: how to understand and work with it

- 1) Freud, S. (1915). Observations on transference love. *S. E., XII*, 159-171. [PEP Web Link](#)
- 2) Bolognini, S. (1911). The analyst's awkward gift: Balancing recognition of sexuality with parental protectiveness. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 80(1), 33-54. [PEP Web Link](#)

Main topic for discussion: What is Transference Love? Is Transference Love the same as "real" love? What is the role of seduction in psychoanalytic encounter? Our main topic for discussion is the origin of Erotized or Erotic Transference, the analyst's potential contributions to its development, and ways of handling these difficult aspects of treatment.

Learning objective for this session: At the conclusion of the session the participants will be able to discuss vicissitudes of erotic transference/ countertransference and the complex and variably erotized nature of the analytic relationship.

Further Optional Reading:

Abend, S. (2009) Freud, transference, and therapeutic action. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 78(3), 871-892. [PEP Web Link](#)

Adler, G. (1980). Transference, real relationship and alliance. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 61, 547-558. [PEP Web Link](#)

Arlow, J.A. (2002). Transference as defense. *JAPA*, 50(4), 1139-1150. [PEP Web Link](#)

Bell, D. (2001). Projective identification. In Bronstein, C. (Ed.), *Kleinian theory: a contemporary perspective* (Chapter 9, pp. 129-147). London & Philadelphia: Whurr Publishers Ltd. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Brenner, C. (1979). Working alliance, therapeutic alliance, and transference. *JAPA*, 27(S), 137-157. [PEP Web Link](#)

Brown, L. J. (2009). Bion's ego psychology: Implications for an intersubjective view of psychic structure. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 78(1), 27-55. [PEP Web Link](#)

Brown, L.J. (2010). Klein, Bion, and intersubjectivity: Becoming, transforming, and dreaming. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 20(6), 669-682. [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"* (pp. 146-164). New Haven: Yale University Press. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Cooper, S.H. (2004). State of the hope: The new bad object in the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 14(5), 527-551. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper, S.H. (2010). An elusive aspect of the analyst's relationship to the transference. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 79(2), 49-380. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper, A. (1987). Changes in psychoanalytic ideas: Transference interpretation. *JAPA*, 35, 99-118. [PEP Web Link](#)

Cooper, A. (1988). Our changing views of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis: Comparing Strachey and Leowald. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 57, 15-27. [PEP Web Link](#)

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](#)

Ferenczi, S. (1949). Confusion of tongues between the adult and the child (The language of tenderness and of passion). *The International Journal of PsychoAnalysis*, 30, 225-230. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Freud, S. (1912). The dynamics of transference. *S. E.*, 12, 99-108. [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](#)

Gabbard, G. (2000). What can neuroscience teach us about transference? *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9(1), 1-18. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Heimann, P. (1950). On counter-transference. *Int. J. Psychoanalysis* 31, 81-84. [PEP Web Link](#)

Jacobs, T. (1996). Analysis, mutual analysis, and self-analysis: On the interplay of minds in the analytic process. *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 4(2), 255-277. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Loewald, H. (1975). Psychoanalysis as an art and the fantasy character of the psychoanalytic situation. *JAPA*, 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. *JAPA*, 35, 557- 582. [PEP Web Link](#)

McLaughlin, J.T. (1981). Transference, psychic reality, and countertransference. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 50, 639-664. [PEP Web Link](#)

Meissner, W.W. (2009). Toward a neuropsychological reconstruction of projective identification. *JAPA*, 57(1), 95-129. [PEP Web Link](#)

Morris, H. (2016). The analyst's offer. *JAPA*, 64, 1173-1187. [Available in the library.]

[Download](#) in the library, check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Ogden, T. (1994). Analyzing the matrix of the transference-countertransference. In *Subjects of analysis*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc. [Available in the library. check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

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*. NY: Routledge. [Available in the library. check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Ornstein, P. (2015). Revisiting the negative therapeutic reaction: An example of comparative psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 10(2), 118-127. [PEP Web Link](#)

Sandler, J. (1976). Countertransference and role-responsiveness. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 3, 43-47. [PEP Web Link](#)

Stolorow, R. & Lachman, F. (1984). Transference: The future of an illusion. *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 12, 19-37. [PEP Web Link](#)

Stern, D., Sander, L., Nahum, J., Harrison, A., Lyons-Ruth, K., Morgan, A., BruschiweilerStern, N. & Tronick, E. (1998). Non-interpretive mechanisms in psychoanalytic therapy: The “something more” than interpretation. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 79(5), 903-921. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Tower, L. (1956). Countertransference. *JAPA*, 4, 224-255. [PEP Web Link](#)

Westen, D. & Gabbard, G. (2002). Developments in cognitive neuroscience II: Implications for theories of transference. *JAPA*, 50(1), 99-134. [PEP Web Link](#)

Whitebook, J. (2002). Slow magic: Psychoanalysis and “the disenchantment of the world.” *JAPA*, 50(4), 1197-1217. [PEP Web Link](#)