

Seattle Psychoanalytic Society and Institute  
**WHAT MAKES THERAPY PSYCHOANALYTIC?**  
Adult Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Program, Fall 2018  
Instructors: **Amy Ferlazzo, MSW** and **Melissa Stoker, MS**

First Block: September 17 - November 5, 2018  
Mondays: 6:30-7:45pm

There are many theories and schools of thought within psychoanalysis. You will be studying a number of different orientations over the next two years. You will undoubtedly notice how they overlap at times, or how they differentiate in important ways at other times. However, the significance of the dynamic unconscious is fundamental to all, and we have chosen to focus on the ubiquity of the unconscious, and how we as clinicians can best serve the people who come to us, by respecting and listening to their unconscious as well as their conscious communication. This is a unifying concept in psychoanalysis, a foundational principle. And we chose to begin with an important aspect of what unites us as psychoanalytic clinicians.

The following two learning objectives have directed our choice of topics and readings:

- At the end of the course participants will be able to recognize and discuss the role and use of the unconscious in everyday life and in psychoanalytically informed psychotherapy. They will be able to listen for verbal and nonverbal unconscious communication, identify possible unconscious underpinnings of conscious choices and actions, and thereby increase their understanding of their patients' internal worlds (and their own in relation to their patients'), providing more options of how and where to intervene with patients.
- At the end of the course participants will have a firm start in creating a safe and effective learning environment where ideas can be shared and explored, and discussions can be wide-ranging. A developing sense of safety will allow participants to intellectually support and challenge one another in a creative, dynamic, and respectful manner.

We have prepared a syllabus that we hope you will find interesting and useful. We look forward to hearing your objectives for yourselves in beginning this program. We welcome feedback on the course and the readings as we proceed. This course and this syllabus are also dynamic undertakings and we are ready to respond to the group's wishes and interests as we work together.

## **Week 1: September 17, 2018**

### **What makes therapy psychoanalytic?**

#### ***Recognizing the unconscious***

- McWilliams, N. (1999). *Psychoanalytic Case Formulation*. New York: The Guilford Press. pp. 25-28. (reading provided)
- McDougall, J. (1985). *Theaters of the Mind*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Prologue, pp. 3-16. (reading provided)

McWilliams advocates for subjectivity in assessment, and introduces the concept of overdetermination. McDougall uses the metaphor of the stage to show the workings of the unconscious in each of our lives.

## **Week 2: September 24, 2018**

### **Listening and communicating – 1**

#### ***Listening to unconscious communication***

- McWilliams, N. (2004). *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press. pp. 132-142. (reading provided)
- Schwaber, E.A. (2005). The Struggle to Listen: Continuing Reflections, Lingering Paradoxes, and Some Thoughts on Recovery of Memory. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 53(3):789-810. (on the PEP-Web. **Read pp. 789-798** (stopping before “A Longer Example: Mr. A))

McWilliams gives an overview of what it means to listen and talk as clinicians. Schwaber offers some common examples of how we all fall short of this at times. She suggests that being aware of this can help us listen anew.

## **Week 3: October 1, 2018**

### **Listening and communicating — 2**

#### ***Listening to unconscious communication***

- McLaughlin, J.T. (1991). Clinical and Theoretical Aspects of Enactment. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 39:595-614. (on the PEP-Web. **Read pp. 601-610.**)

McLaughlin’s example, pulled from a longer article about enactments, shows how he came to recognize a patient’s unconscious communication, a communication he could have ignored and rationalized as simply a ‘difficult patient’. McLaughlin listens to his own unconscious and then uses that to hear his patient more clearly, and speak with her in a way she can better hear.

#### **Week 4: October 8, 2018**

##### **Frame, safety and psychoanalytic attitudes**

##### ***Unconscious meaning in actions***

- McWilliams, N. (1999). *Psychoanalytic Case Formulation*. New York: The Guilford Press. Pp. 29-47. (reading provided)
- McWilliams, N. (2004). *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press. Pp. 81-86; 99-107; 142-149. (reading provided)
- Abbasi, A. (2012). A Very Dangerous Conversation: The Patient's Internal Conflicts Elaborated Through the Use of Ethnic and Religious Differences between Analyst and Patient. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 93(3):515-534. (on the PEP-Web)

McWilliams again provides a basic understanding of a psychodynamic frame. Abbasi's case, while ostensibly focused on issues of religious and ethnic difference, brings to light aspects of frame and how it can be adapted.

#### **Week 5: October 15, 2018**

##### **Thinking beyond symptom removal; treatment goals**

##### ***Conscious and unconscious purposes and goals***

- Ticho, E.A. (1972). Termination of Psychoanalysis: Treatment Goals, Life Goals. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 41:315-333. (**Excerpted passages provided.**)
- The Case for Psychoanalysis: Exploring the Scientific Evidence. John Thor Cornelius, MD. <https://youtu.be/IQBx5TONHac> (on the Web)

Ticho differentiates life goals (the change a patient wants from therapy) and treatment goals (what psychically needs to happen to free a person to reach their life goals). Cornelius is making an evidence-based case for psychoanalysis (or psychoanalytic psychotherapy). We want to think about his results while considering the workings of the unconscious in analytically informed treatment.

#### **Week 6: October 22, 2018**

##### **Insight, Psychic change and therapeutic action**

##### ***Being impacted by the dynamic unconscious***

- McLaughlin, J.T. (1988). The Analyst's Insights. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 57:370-389. (on the PEP-Web)

McLaughlin shares his internal workings after feeling stuck with a patient. His insight allows him to move past this stuck place and create space for therapeutic work to continue.

**Week 7: October 29, 2018**

**Transference and countertransference**

***The unconscious story that transference tells***

- Sandler, J. (1976). Countertransference and Role-Responsiveness. *Int. Rev. Psycho-Anal.*, 3:43-47. (on the PEP-Web)

A simple gesture is used to uncover meaning between the therapist and patient.

**Week 8: November 5, 2018**

**Defense and conflict**

***Unconscious conflict and how we protect ourselves***

- McWilliams, N. (1994). *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis*. New York: The Guilford Press. pp. 96-100; 117. (reading provided)
- Cabaniss, D. (2013). *Psychodynamic Formulation*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 42-43. (reading provided)
- Brenner, C. (1979). The Components of Psychic Conflict and its Consequences in Mental Life. *Psychoanal Q.*, 48:547-567. (**Excerpted passages provided**)

McWilliams and Cabaniss give examples of some of the most well-know psychic defenses. Brenner gives a more detailed picture of how defense is related to conflict. Brenner's definition of defense differs from McWilliams and Cabaniss, and paves the way to explain compromise formations – what Brenner believes comprises all of our psychic life, both healthy and pathological.