CF 604, Epistemology I: Foundations for Clinical Theories
Joe Palombo

Goals

1. To make students aware of the foundations of clinical theories;
2. To familiarize students with the philosophical underpinnings of clinical theories, such as positivism, hermeneutic theory, constructivism, constructionism, and post-positivism;
3. To delineate the major controversies within these historical traditions, so as to enable students to evaluate particular clinical theories.

Objectives

1. To examine the nature of paradigms generally;
2. To survey some of the major modern philosophical movements and their relevance to clinical theories;
3. To survey the various psychoanalytic paradigms so as to understand their underpinnings;
4. To develop some criteria as to what constitutes a sound clinical theory within a psychoanalytic paradigm.

Class I. & II. Introduction & Overview
Freud's dream of a scientific psychology


The components of a clinical theory.
Philosophical underpinnings: a) Positivist, b) Post-Positivist, c) Hermeneutic, d) Constructivist.


View Point:

a. Descriptive viewpoint: Neutrality and the observational field. The task in therapy is that of gathering uncontaminated data by being free of countertransference interferences. The field of observation is unaffected by the observer. There is a reality which is apprehensible by the observer.


b. Empathic/introspective perspective: Intersubjective & subjective viewpoints: Empathy or vicarious introspection: Empathy defines the field: Vicarious introspection is the act through which the contents of another person’s mind is apprehended. It is a process that leads to an understanding of how people feel, how they think, how they perceive reality, and how they give meaning to those perceptions. The observer occupies an imaginary point within the object. Attunement permits the observer to vicariously experience the affect states of the other person.


Metapsychology:

Introduction

(1) It specifies a methodology and the data collection tools that
provide valid and reliable information about the field of observation.
(2) It proposes a metapsychology derived from a body of knowledge to which other disciplines have contributed: Developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychopathology, biogenetic, sociology, anthropology, etc. The metapsychology may be systematized into a general psychology.


Developmental theory
(1) must account for innate givens, potentialities. A number of innate potentialities and competencies are present at birth. These manifest within a spectrum that ranges from deficient to gifted. They include among other things: Temperamental variations (Chess & Thomas). Perceptual variations. Sensory variations. Motoric variations. Variations in cognition, interactions with others, and environmental factors:
(2) Its theory details the progression of the evolving personality from infancy into senescence.
(3) The sense of self:

(a) The self is the structure that undergirds the meaning and value systems which are its content. It results from a person's effort to organize experiences into a coherent "meaning and value system".
(b) The maintenance of cohesion is the primary task of the self.
(c) Affect theory:

i) Affects in the form of sensations of pleasure or unpleasure related to physiological relations, are innate in the human infant.
ii) Affects have a signal function (Saari: communicative regulators'. P.70)
iii) Affects lead to the evolution of a meaning system through their contribution to the organization of experience.

Theory of motivation (psychodynamics):
Theory of pathology: conflict or deficit.

1. It proposes a theory of pathology which indicates the manner in which derailments may occur during the course of
development that lead either to dysfunctional states, or disorders of the self. Etiology or genetic dynamic factors: Two competing view of pathology have now emerged: One states that pathology derives from unresolved conflict, and the other states that it stems from developmental failures.

2. Conflict models
3. Deficit models
4. Psychopathology is the result of deficits, distortion or weaknesses in the sense of self (p.53). The evidence is that the self is multi-fragmented, disharmonious, depleted, devitalized, or enfeebled (p.60).
5. Single traumatic events rarely play such a decisive role in pathology as to produce the types of deficits encountered in narcissistic personality disturbances. It is rather the chronic multiple failures of the selfobjects that lead to such deficits.
6. The meaning of the experience is the paramount factor in the effect an event has on the person.
7. The affects surrounding that experience remain unintegrated, and become the focus around which symptoms are manifest.
8. Symptoms: Symptoms are the expression of the concretization of the experience of danger related to the anxiety surrounding the loss of meaning or reflect psychological or neuropsychological deficits.


The treatment process:

1. Its clinical theory proposes of a set of practice principles through which: data is to be collected.
2. Inferences are made from that data.
3. Interventions which would bring about change in the person are enunciated.
4. The transference/countertransference configuration is the key to the understanding of the therapeutic process.


**III. Class III. & IV. Philosophical underpinning**
1. The scientific method: The natural science perspective. Quantitative methods yield general laws about the workings of our universe.
2. View point: Descriptive view point: Neutrality and the observational field.
3. The root metaphor: mechanistic or organismic.
4. Positivistic metapsychologies: Drive theory (Freud), ego psychology (A. Freud, Hartmann), early object relations theory (M. Klein, Kernberg), self psychology (early Kohut), information processing theories (Basch)


The critique of positivism:
The nature of paradigms: Kuhn on "scientific revolutions."

- a. Normal science and anomalies
- b. The developmental phases of paradigms
- c. The scientific revolutions
- d. The incommensurability of paradigms
- e. The nature of data
- f. World views


The post-positivist response:

- a. Regularities exist in the universe but we can only obtain probabilistic results
- b. There is a universal method for conducting inquiries into the natural and human realms.
- Quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined to answer questions
- c. Although the concepts the observer uses to explore the universe are invention there are limits to the extent to which the observer affects what he or she observes
- d. The worlds we construct in our inquiries are "possible worlds"
- e. Post-positivistic metapsychologies: Stern's & Lichtenberg's
developmental theories


Class V. Philosophical underpinnings: Hermeneutics
Natural science Vs Human science perspective. Meanings are central to understanding human beings and human motivation.

2. Root metaphor: The role of textual interpretation: the contextual metaphor. Understanding the meaning of a text as the central concern. Qualitative methods can yield statements about the regularities in our universe.
3. Hermeneutic metapsychologies: self psychology (Later Kohut), intersubjectivity theory (Stolorow).

Critiques of hermeneutic perspectives.


Class VI. Philosophical underpinnings: Constructivism/Constructionism
The social construction of reality
1. Viewpoint:
   a. The relativity of all world views. Qualitative methods determined by the investigator yield statements about the context of inquiry
   b. The observer affects what he or she observes
   c. All inquiry is governed by the values the inquirer bring to the task
2. Root metaphor: Total contextualism.
3. Constructivist metapsychologies: Gill, Hoffman, Mitchell
4. Constructionist metapsychologies: Gergen,

Critique of constructionist and constructivist perspectives.
Constructivism:


Constructionism:


Class VII. Philosophical underpinnings: Narrative theory
A. A theory about theories.
B. Narrative theorists range from the post-positivistic to the constructionist
C. Theories are not narratives or they are engines for generating narratives.
D. Narrative metapsychologies: Schafer, Spence, Saari, Palombo


Class VIII. Review and questions
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<th>Psychoanalytic Paradigm</th>
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<td>B. Hermeneuticist:</td>
<td>D. Freud's clinical theory. Kohut's Self psychology. Stolorow's intersubjective theory.</td>
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