



**The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis**  
**#S306 - Case Seminar: Analysis of Character/ Personality**

**Via Zoom**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Instructor: Wilda Mesias, PhD.**

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**Course description:** This course will introduce candidates to the topic of character and character traits, including the concepts of character armor, pleasure in repetition, defenses, and resistances. Moving from Freud to Reich to contemporary perspectives, we will see how character can shape the content and expression of the transference and how this can contribute to the analyst's countertransference and other subjective experiences. Building on these concepts, we will explore how the work of analysis can render ego-syntonic traits ego-dystonic. We will also critically evaluate the use of the terms character and personality organization, as well as the role of the analyst's own character.

**Learning objectives:**

- To define character and character traits.
- To examine what is meant by character and personality organizations.
- To use the material to identify transference and countertransference issues in the analysis of character/personality.
- To demonstrate how these concepts apply to patients via case presentations.

**Course etiquette and confidentiality:** Given that we will be having our class discussions on Zoom, it is critical that we all be respectful and mindful of one another's time and space. As such, please keep your cameras on and mute yourselves while others are presenting their thoughts. Additionally, because our case discussions and other discussions may feature confidential clinical information (or other sensitive information not to be disclosed outside of the learning environment), *it is imperative that you (1) find a place in which to log in to the class that is private and in which you and others cannot be overheard and (2) refrain from discussion of the above-mentioned confidential or sensitive information outside of our class time.*

## **Reading Material:**

### **Texts:**

You will need the following texts (both are available on Amazon in paperback and kindle form).

- Reich, W. (1980). *Character Analysis. Third Edition*. Noonday Press-Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Bollas C. (2021). *Three characters, narcissistic, borderline, manic depressive*. Phoenix Publishing House.

\*\*All other readings will be provided to you via Dropbox

### **Writing Requirement:**

A three to five page paper that demonstrates an understanding of the concepts analyzed in class and their application. We will discuss this requirement in our first meeting. **Paper is due on the last day of class (no exceptions).**

### **Class and Readings:**

**Class I: Introduction to the concept. Basic techniques in the treatment of character formations.**

#### **Readings:**

- Freud, S. (1916). Some character-types met within psycho-analytic work. *Standard Edition*, 14, 309-333.
- Reich, W. Part one (pp. 3-48).

#### **Suggested reading:**

- Anthi, R. (2020). Wilhelm Reich's character analysis revisited. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 43(1), 40-49.

## **Class II: Character armoring and character resistance.**

### **Readings:**

- Reich, W. (1980). Part one (pp. 42-120).
- Lerner, R. (2021). Violence in infancy and its relation with perverse aspect in the development of a child. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 102, 543-559.

## **Class III. Transference issues.**

### **Readings:**

- Reich, W. (1980). Part one (pp. 122-145).
- Tanis, B. (2021). The infantile: Its multiple dimensions. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 102, 572-587.
- Kernberg, O. F. (2019) Therapeutic implications of transference structures in various personality pathologies. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 67, 951-986.

## **Class IV. The function of character formation.**

### **Readings:**

- Reich, W. (1980). Part two (pp. 153-198).
- Bourdin, D. (2022). Masochism. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 103, 1073-1088.

## **Class V. Character types.**

- Reich, W. (1980). Part two (pp. 204-270).
- Novick, J. & Novick, K. (2022). A metapsychological framework for sadomasochism. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 103, 1038-1056.

### **Class VI. Character-Personality Organizations. Narcissistic.**

- Kohut, H. (2022). *The Italian Psychoanalytic Annual*, 16, 5, 83-90.
- Bollas, C. (2021). Chapter 1.
- Kite, J. (2016). The fundamental ethical ambiguity of the analyst as a person. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 64, 6, 1153-1171.
- Caprilli, S. (2023). The psychological impact of an unreliable father on his son and on the family: Therapeutic interventions with the child and within the family system. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 18, 26-39.

### **Class VII. Character-Personality Organizations. Borderline.**

- Stone, M. H. (2022). Borderline personality disorder: Clinical guidelines for treatment. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 50, 45-63.
- Masterson, J. F. & Rinsley, D. B. (1975). The borderline syndrome: The role of the mother in the genesis and psychic structure of the borderline personality. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 56, 163-177.
- Bollas, C. (2021). Chapter II.

### **Class VIII. Character-Personality Organizations. Manic-Depressive. Schizoid.**

- Guntrip, H. (1962). The manic-depressive problem in the light of the schizoid process. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, 98-112.
- Orcutt, C. (2021). *The unanswered self. The Masterson approach to the healing of personality disorders.* Ch 4, pp. 91-130. Karnac.
- Bollas, C. (2021). Chapter III.
- Bollas, C. (2021). Discussion.