

TT-003-CB

SEMINAR – Sharon Bedard

Christopher Bollas – As the Evocative Object

As psychotherapists, what we have in common is a tradition that for the rest of our life will demand a constant engagement with the act of thinking and reflecting. Thinking is part of learning new ideas and reflecting is part of absorbing and assimilating them into our psyche. Christopher Bollas describes theory in the following way:

“A theory (emphasis added) is a metasensual phenomenon. It allows one to see something not seen by other theories; to have as an unconscious possibility should clinical need for it to arise.” (Bollas, 2007, p. 82)

“Psychoanalysts need to learn all the theories they can so that they may become unconscious perception-structures enabling practitioners to participate more deeply in the psychoanalytic experience. The analysand’s unconscious will sense the range of the perceptive receptiveness of the psychoanalyst”. (Bollas, 2007, p. 82)

“If theory is perception, if it indicates an ethics of practice, it also serves as a sign of the limits of consciousness. However much a theory presumes to tell us something about a person, its actual function is less in what it discovers than in how it sees.” (Bollas, 2007, p. 83)

We will be looking at a number of selected writings by Christopher Bollas. His creative effort to say something about how he has digested psychodynamic theory from Freud onwards, and his own original and lively thinking, will further our capacities to think, reflect and perhaps write. This is the tradition to which you have subscribed, and it is a living and changing field.

We are all heirs to a psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic tradition and we enter that tradition to take up our full membership. Psychoanalysis and more specifically psychodynamic psychotherapy is at one dimension an oral tradition – we talk and we listen, not merely as a matter of practice, but as a manner of training – we are in personal therapy, group therapy, individual supervision, group supervision, dream groups, seminars and concentrations – in other words we are with others and we talk. But we are also writers – this is communicated to us immediately as we write our autobiographies when we apply. We go on to write our application to the formation years, our application to supervision and our regular supervision updates, and we write our case histories. We are writing about our ability to think, theorize and remain humanly present – not just in our therapeutic clinical work – but in our writing as well. We join a tradition and an ongoing dialogue carried out through learning to reflect via the medium of the written word. We are trained to be writers as a subsidiary task to our training as psychotherapists. You will be encouraged to begin your own process of writing and exploring your own thinking.

CAPT members are welcome and will be invited to speak with me about their own clinical experience in order to determine whether or not they will benefit from this seminar.

Readings are supplied prior to the seminar and the first reading will be available during the summer.

Dates and Times : the days will be Saturdays 10:30 – 2:00, approximately once a month, specific dates will be sent.

Location: Depending on the size – my home. 78 Bertmount Ave., Toronto.
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