

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

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Theory I: Basic Concepts

Seminar Year I, Fall 2014

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This course provides an introduction to psychoanalytic theory to prepare candidates for more in depth learning throughout psychoanalytic training. We will examine several basic concepts of psychoanalysis, including psychic reality, drive, defense, object, self, intersubjectivity, and attachment. We will consider the historical, political, and cultural contexts in which psychoanalytic theories develop, as well as how the major schools of thought—classical, ego psychology, object relations, self psychology, relational, and attachment theory—evolved and have influenced one another. We will also evaluate each psychoanalytic theory by asking—does each new model correct the deficiencies of its predecessors? What are its deficiencies? How does it affect clinical technique? What is its proposed method of therapeutic action? Readings include a range of classical and contemporary papers from multiple perspectives. In addition, during six sessions candidates will have the opportunity to hear clinical process from an ongoing analysis.

I. September 18: Framing Context and Development of Psychoanalytic Theory

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss, and begin to contextualize the general trends and tensions in the evolution of psychoanalytic theory.

This first week we will take a broad view of the evolution of psychoanalytic thought and psychoanalytic models in America over the last century.

Gabbard gives a brief synopsis of the development of pluralism in our theory. He challenges us to recognize that there is no single “right way” to practice analysis and to direct debate toward constructive critique of our work.

Gabbard, G.O. (2000). American Psychoanalysis in the New Millennium. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 48(1):293-295. [PEP Web Link](#)

Greenberg and Mitchell address the need Psychoanalysis has, indeed the need that all scientific disciplines have, for a shared body of knowledge, for facts, for testable

predictions, for experimentation, and for a gradual accumulation of neutral observations and confirmed hypotheses. They describe psychoanalysis as an interpretive discipline, guided by one's own theoretical principles vs. the empirical model of "objective reality" which dominated science until the middle of the twentieth century. They discuss the nature of theory, and how theoretical models change over time.

Greenberg, J., & Mitchell, S. (1983). Introduction: Conceptual Models in Psychoanalytic Theory. In *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA: 14-20. *[available in the library]*

Strenger describes the tension between the classic (Freud, Hartmann, Klein) and the romantic (Ferenczi, Balint, Winnicott, Kohut) visions of human reality, and how these visions express themselves in clinical dilemmas as well as in theory. He maintains that the tension is not to be resolved, and that one of the goals for the analyst must be to find the right balance between the two.

Strenger, C. (1989). The Classic and Romantic Vision in Psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 70: 593-610. [PEP Web Link](#)

II. October 2: Freud: Psychic Reality, Drive Theory, and the Oedipus Complex

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss Freud and the evolving view of the Oedipus complex.

This is a brief glimpse at Freud's very early thinking and a review of the Oedipus complex and its controversy in our work.

Freud introduces the term "screen memories" which represents a dual reality – what really exists, and what exists as truth in the psyche. His discussion touches on the problems of memory and its distortions, showing how the mind edits reality to serve a function. He highlights the importance of fantasy as he developed his theory of infantile sexuality and the topographic model.

Psychosexual Development Freud, S. (1899). Screen Memories. *Standard Edition* 3: 301-322. [PEP Web Link](#)

Greenberg presents a summary of Freud's drive theory and the full complexity of the Oedipus complex. He cautions that we lose some essential understanding of our patients if we either embrace or discard Freud's theory. Although Greenberg does not specifically mention it, the tri-partite, structural model is the background for his discussion.

Greenberg, J. (1991). Introduction: Towards a New Oedipus Complex. In *Oedipus and Beyond*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. : 1-18. *[available in the library]*

For further reading:

Freud, S. (1940{1938}). An Outline of Psychoanalysis. Standard Edition 23: 141-207. [PEP Web Link](#)

III. October 9: Drive, Ego, and Defense Since Freud

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss the evolution of drive theory and ego psychology.

Greenberg attributes the widening scope of psychoanalysis to the work of Heinz Hartmann. In Hartmann's elaboration of Freudian drive theory, he loyally defended Freud but also stressed the role of the aggressive drive in the mental apparatus (vs. Freud's emphasis on the libido). His concepts of ego autonomy and adaptation, and the relative importance of aggression, opened up the topic of object relations and their development for the first time.

Greenberg, J. (1986). Heinz Hartmann and Drive Theory: A Reevaluation. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 6: 523-541. [PEP Web Link](#)

Wallerstein gives an overview of ego psychology at its height in post World War II America. He describes the transition of psychoanalysis from being primarily a drive psychology to a period in which the ego was accorded equal importance. He then describes the demise of ego psychology as the dominant theory beginning in the late 1970's with increased theoretical pluralism.

Wallerstein, R.S. (2002). The Growth and Transformation of American Ego Psychology. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 50: 135-168. [PEP Web Link](#)

IV. October 16: Object

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss the development of object relations theory.

Mitchell and Black provide a clearly written summary of Melanie Klein's complicated theory and explain how her understanding of the mind differed from Freud's. They trace the enormous impact of her ideas – as the basis of various object relations theories (Fairbairn, Winnicott), and on contemporary Kleinians (Bion, Joseph, Ogden).

Mitchell, S. & Black, M. (1995). "Melanie Klein and Contemporary Kleinian Theory". In *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*. Basic Books, New York, NY: 85-111. *[available in the library]*

Through his clinical observations, Fairbairn describes his move away from drive theory and ego psychology, asserting that libidinal aims are secondary to object relationships; that the relationship with the object, not the gratification of an impulse, is the ultimate aim of libidinal striving. This is the beginning of a two

person psychology in psychoanalysis which would be further developed over the next sixty years.

Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1943). "The Repression and Return of Bad Objects (With Special Reference to the 'War Neuroses')". In *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*. Routledge, London. 1952: 59-81. [PEP Web Link](#)

Fairbairn, R (1963). Synopsis of an Object Relations Theory of the Personality. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 44: 224-225. [PEP Web Link](#)

For Further Reading:

Winnicott, D.W. (1953). Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34: 89-97. Also in D.W. Winnicott (1978). *Through Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis*. London, The Hogarth Press: 229-242. [PEP Web Link](#)

V. October 23: Self

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss the development of the psychology of the self.

Kohut and Wolf describe the need for a psychology of the self in order to understand patients characterized by narcissistic vulnerability. They maintain that these patients could not be understood or treated successfully through the lens of classic theory. They describe the origins and types of self pathology and briefly summarize its treatment. This is a clearly written summary of the early stage of Kohutian self psychology, both clinical and theoretical.

Kohut, H. and Wolf, E. (1978). Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment: An Outline. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 59: 413-425. [PEP Web Link](#)

In this classic paper Kohut lucidly details his own two analyses, comparing a classic to a self psychological approach.

Kohut, H. (1979). The Two Analyses of Mr. Z. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 60: 3-27. [PEP Web Link](#)

For further reading:

Goldberg, A. (1998). Self-Psychology Since Kohut. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 67: 240-255. [PEP Web Link](#)

VI. October 30: Further Evolution from "One Person" to "Two Person"—Intersubjectivity and Relationality

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss the evolution of a "two person" psychology.

Hoffman uses the psychoanalytic concept of the “blank screen” to illustrate through a review of the literature the evolution from a one to a two person psychology. He specifically emphasizes the recognition that patients make plausible inferences regarding aspects of their analyst’s experience. He makes central to technique the analysis of the patient’s interpretations of the analyst’s countertransference.

Hoffman, Irwin (1983). The Patient as Interpreter of the Analyst’s Experience. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 19: 389-422. [PEP Web Link](#)

Aron elaborates Hoffman’s ideas, but refers to the analyst’s “subjectivity” rather than countertransference. His relational approach views the patient--analyst relationship as continually established and reestablished through ongoing mutual influence in which both patient and analyst affect, and are affected by, each other. The exploration of this experience of the analyst’s subjectivity represents an underemployed aspect of the analysis of the transference.

Aron, Lewis (1991). The Patient’s Experience of the Analyst’s Subjectivity. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 1: 29-51. [PEP Web Link](#)

Guest Speaker: Holly Levenkron, LICSW

For Further Reading:

**Bromberg, P. (2003). One Need Not Be a House to be Haunted: on Enactment, Dissociation, and the Dread of “Not-Me.” *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 13: 689-710. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ehrenberg, D.B. (1974). The Intimate Edge in Therapeutic Relatedness. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 10: 423-437. [PEP Web Link](#)

Frankel, J. (1998). Are Interpersonal and Relational Psychoanalysis the Same? *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 34: 485-500. [PEP Web Link](#)

**Levenkron, Holly (2009). Engaging the Implicit: Meeting Points Between the Boston Change Process Study Group and Relational Psychoanalysis. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 45: 179-217. [PEP Web Link](#)

**Steckler, G. (2003). Affect: The Heart of the Matter. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 13: 711-726. [PEP Web Link](#)

Renik, O. (1993). Analytic Interaction: Conceptualizing Technique in Light of the Analyst's Irreducible Subjectivity. *Psychoanal Q.*, 62:553-571. 

VII. November 6: Attachment Theory

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss attachment theory.

Mitchell views psychoanalysis as having always been relational, in that it has always been centrally concerned with human relatedness. He describes the work of Bowlby,

Fairbairn, Leowald, Sullivan, and Winnicott as relational, and attempts to describe their work as it elaborates upon, and differs from, drive theory. He presents the analysis of a woman to illustrate the ways in which their writings converge in thinking about the psychoanalytic process and attachment theory.

Mitchell, S. A. (1999). Attachment Theory and the Psychoanalytic Tradition: Reflections on Human Relationality. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 9: 85-107. [PEP Web Link](#)

Fonagy outlines his concept of mentalization, which he defines as the capacity to think about mental states in one's self and others. He discusses the clinical implications in the treatment of character disordered individuals who may have defensively inhibited their own capacity to mentalize. Finally, he argues that the therapeutic effect of analysis depends on its ability to help patients learn to mentalize.

Fonagy, P. (2000). Attachment and Borderline Personality Disorder. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 48:1129-1146. [PEP Web Link](#)

For further reading

Fonagy, P., Target, M. (2007). The Rooting of the Mind in the Body: New Links between Attachment Theory and Psychoanalytic Thought. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 55:411-456. [PEP Web Link](#)

Target, M., Fonagy, P. (1996). Playing with Reality: II. The Development of Psychic Reality from a Theoretical Perspective. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 77: 459-479. [PEP Web Link](#)

Fonagy, P., Target, M. (2007). Playing with Reality: IV. A Theory of External Reality Rooted in Intersubjectivity. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 88:917-937. [PEP Web Link](#)

VIII. November 13: How Does Psychoanalysis Lead to Change? Concepts of Therapeutic Action

Learning Objective: Candidates will discuss concepts of therapeutic action.

Gabbard and Westen attempt to integrate developments within and outside of psychoanalysis in defining a more up to date theory of therapeutic action. Such a theory must include both the aim of treatment and the techniques used to facilitate those changes. Advances in neuroscience as well as the waning of the "interpretation versus relationship" debate lead to the conclusion that therapeutic change takes place through multiple modes.

Gabbard, G. O. and Westen, D. (2003). Rethinking Therapeutic Action. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 84: 823-841. [PEP Web Link](#)