

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

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Seminar Year II Object Relations Spring, 2016

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The aim of this seminar is to introduce you to the origins and early development of the psychoanalytic approach known as 'object relations'. It is in fact a group of theories, by now encompassing a rather wide range of views, but we will try to show how this strand of psychoanalytic thought emerged in the 1930's and 40's, primarily in England—though its creators included psychoanalysts originally from Vienna, Budapest, and Edinburgh. We will pay particular attention to the early work of Melanie Klein and trace her influence on D.W. Winnicott and W.R.D. Fairbairn, then continue with their own highly original contributions. We will study two papers from the same period by the Hungarian psychoanalyst and colleague of Sandor Ferenczi, Michael Balint, in which he emphasizes early object relations both in the theory of development and technique. Finally we will take up the work of John Bowlby, in which the weight of significance has radically shifted from inner wish to outer object. In our last week we will reflect, along with Thomas Ogden, on reading and thinking—about and with—the objects in our own psychoanalytic past.

Seminar dates: April 7, 14, 21, 28; May 5, 12, 19, 26.

Week 1

Klein, M. (1926). The psychological principles of infant analysis. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-1945, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Klein, M. (1928). Early stages of the oedipus complex. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-1945, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe the novel play techniques which Melanie Klein developed for the psychoanalytic treatment of children under the age of six, the assumptions she brought to the treatment, and how the combination of these led to surprising findings about the onset and content of very young children's anxieties.

Week 2

Klein, M. (1929). Personification in the play of children. In M. Klein (1968). Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-45, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Klein, M. (1930). The importance of symbol formation in the development of the ego. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-45, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Klein, M. (1929). Infantile anxiety-situations reflected in a work of art and the creative impulse. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psychoanalysis 1921-45, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe Mrs. Klein's observations of children's play activity, daydreams, and spontaneous stories, and how their use of persons and things led naturally to the personification of their wishes and anxieties, and to a shift in emphasis in her description from psychosexual sources of instinctual strivings to the objects of those strivings.

Week 3

Balint, M. (1937). Early developmental states of the ego. Primary object-love. In M. Balint (1965), Primary love and psycho-analytic technique, New York, Liveright. [PEP Web Link](#) & [Available in [Library](#)]

Balint, M. (1934). The final goal of psycho-analytic treatment. In M. Balint (1965), Primary love and psycho-analytic technique, New York, Liveright. [PEP Web Link](#) & [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning Objective: From the reports of Michael Balint, a contemporary participant and observer of the scene, students will be able to reconstruct and critically evaluate the controversy which arose in the 1920's and 30's between psychoanalysts in London and Vienna, regarding the typical contents of the mental lives of very young children and infants.

Week 4

Winnicott, D.W. (1935). The manic defense. In D.W. Winnicott (1975), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1941). The observation of infants in set situation. In D.W. Winnicott (1975), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1945). Primitive emotional development. In D.W. Winnicott (1975), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe how D.W. Winnicott, a pediatrician as well as child and adult psychoanalyst, initially made use of Melanie Klein's work on fantasy and the experience of an inner world. Students will be able to compare ways in which some of Winnicott's methods of observation differed from those of Klein, leading ultimately to his own distinctive views of early development and primitive mental states.

Week 5

Winnicott, D.W. (1951). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In D.W. Winnicott (1975), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1954). The depressive position in normal emotional development. In D.W. Winnicott, Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1958). Metapsychological and clinical aspects of regression within the psycho-analytical set-up. Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: Students will be able to outline one of Winnicott’s most original contributions to the theory of development, the idea of ‘transitional objects and transitional phenomena’—neither inner reality nor outer reality, but “a whole intermediate territory between ‘inner psychic reality’ and ‘the external world as perceived by two persons in common’, that is to say, over the whole cultural field.”

Week 6

Fairbairn, W.R.D. (1949). Steps in the development of an object-relations theory of the personality. In W.R.D. Fairbairn (1952), Psychoanalytic studies of the personality, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. [PEP Web Link](#)

Sutherland, J.D. (1963). Object-relations theory and the conceptual model of psychoanalysis. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 36: 109-121. [Available in [Library](#)]

Optional:

Kernberg, O.F. (1963). Discussion of J.D. Sutherland’s paper: ‘Object relations and the conceptual model of psychoanalysis’. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 36: 121-124. [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe and critically evaluate W.R.D. Fairbairn’s account of the clinical psychoanalytic observations and theoretical reasoning which led him to his own formulation of what he called an ‘object relations theory of personality’, amounting to an almost completely novel conception of psychic structure.

Week 7

Bowlby, J. (1958). The nature of the child’s tie to his mother. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 39: 350-373. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

Bowlby, J. (1960). Grief and mourning in infancy and early childhood. Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 15: 9-52. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe the direct observations of children and the arguments marshalled by John Bowlby in his critical discussion of previous psychoanalytic views (in particular those of Melanie Klein and Anna Freud) and reformulation of the nature of early object ties to the mother.

Week 8

Ogden, T.H. (2001). Reading Winnicott. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 70: 299-323. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ogden, T.H. (2010). Why read Fairbairn? International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 91: 101-118. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

Ogden, T.H. (2001). A new reading of the origins of object-relations theory. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 83: 767-782. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objectives: Students and faculty will reflect on the activity of reading the work of D.W. Winnicott and W.R.D. Fairbairn through comparing their experiences with those of an especially talented reader, Thomas Ogden. This will also provide students an opportunity to clarify their own thoughts on the psychoanalytic theory of basic mental structures.