MELANIE KLEIN AND THE NEO-KLEINIANs

Instructors: James Barron, PhD and Adam Narva, PhD

Dates: 2/1, 2/8, 2/22/18

Time: 5:30 – 7:00 pm

This seminar will examine some of the major innovations to psychoanalytic thinking and practice contributed by Melanie Klein and elaborated by several of her followers. Taken as a whole, they constitute some of the most clinically relevant ideas and models of unconscious phantasies, pre-verbal states of mind, primitive anxieties and defenses, and normal and pathological development. Paradoxically her ideas are now widely accepted while continuing to stir up controversy between detractors and adherents. Her work is dense with new observations, discoveries, and bold theorizing. In our readings and discussions, we will strive to achieve optimal tension between empathic identification with and critical reflection upon her ideas. Although the focus will be on theory, we will invite all participants to contribute clinical examples that relate theory to actual practice whenever possible.

To begin to enter her realm, you may want to read the introduction and first two chapters (The Psychological Foundations of Child Analysis and The Technique of Early Analysis) from her 1932 volume, The Psycho-Analysis of Children (accessible on PEP Web).
Session 1 (Feb. 1) Introduction to Kleinian Object Relations Theory
Learning Objective: Identify key aspects of the concept of object relations theory in Freud’s work and Klein’s expansion of the concept.


Suggested:


Session 2 (Feb. 8) Unconscious Phantasy
Learning Objective: Describe unconscious phantasy as the psychic representative of drive that is linked both to internal objects and external reality.


Suggested:

Session 3 (Feb. 22) The Depressive Position
Learning Objective: Describe the depressive position as a critically important, yet highly vulnerable developmental achievement.


Suggested:

Session 4 (Mar. 1) The Paranoid-Schizoid Position
Learning Objective: Identify the constellation of primitive anxieties and defenses that constitute the paranoid-schizoid position.


Suggested:

Session 5 (Mar. 8) Early Precursors of the Oedipus Complex
Learning Objective: Connect the child’s capacity to experience unconscious phantasy to the early development of Oedipal dynamics.


Suggested:

Session 6 (Mar. 15) Projective Identification
Learning Objective: Compare the healthy and pathological uses of the mechanism of projective identification


Suggested:

Session 7 (Mar. 22) Projective Identification and Theory of Thinking
Learning Objective: Describe the difference between symbol formation in the paranoid-schizoid position and symbol formation in the depressive position; explain the function of projective identification in the development (and destruction) of the capacity to think.


Session 8 (Mar. 29) Transference Viewed through a Kleinian Lens

Learning Objective: Describe how the concept of the “total situation” enhances our understanding of what is being activated in the transference.


Suggested: