



Bion: His Theory and its Clinical Implications

Instructors: Adam Narva, PhD and Karen Roos, LICSW

1. September 24. **Introduction**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to define Bion's concept of *attacks on Linking*, and identify one essential characteristic of Bion's early period and one essential characteristic of Bion's late period.

Bion, W. (1959) Attacks on Linking. *IJP*, 40:308-315. [PEP Web Link](#)

Recommended: **Ogden, T.** (2004) An introduction to the reading of Bion. *IJP*, 85: 285-300. [PEP Web Link](#)

2. October 1. **Bion's Pre-psychoanalytic Experiences**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to explain how Bion's experience in war influenced his development of the concept of *alpha function*, and to discuss Brown's concept of a *Constellation for Thinking*.

Brown, L.J. (2012) Bion's discovery of alpha function: Thinking under fire on the battlefield and in the consulting room. *IJP*, 93: 1191-1214. [PEP Web Link](#)

Recommended: **Bion, W.** () War Memoirs. In *Complete Works, vol.3, pp. 244-254.* ("Amiens") [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

3. October 8. **Bion's Bedrock: Learning from Experience**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to define Bion's concepts of *alpha function*, *beta elements*, and *contact barrier*.

Bion, W. (1962) Learning from Experience. In *Seven Servants*. NY: Jason Aronson, 1977. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 27 and 28. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

4. October 15. **Bion's Theory of Thinking**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to describe Bion's concept of an *apparatus for thinking*, and Bion's assertion that in hallucinations, "the sense organs operate in reverse."

Bion, W. (1962) The Psycho-Analytic Study of Thinking. *IJP*, 43: 306-310. [PEP Web Link](#)

Recommended: **Emanuel, R.** (2012) An application of Bion's theory of thinking and transformations in hallucinosis. An experience of supervision with Dr. Donald Meltzer. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 38: 284-301. [PEP Web Link](#)

5. October 29. **Dreaming and Reverie**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to describe Bion's concept of *waking dream thought*.

Bion, W. (1962) Learning from Experience. In *Seven Servants*. NY: Jason Aronson, 1977. Chapter 7. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Ogden, T. (2003) On not being able to dream. *IJP*, 84: 17-30. [PEP Web Link](#)

Recommended: **Bion, W.** (1959/1992) *Cogitations*, pages 43-69. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

6. November 5. **Memory and Desire**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to explain Bion's injunction to abandon "memory and desire" in psychoanalytic listening.

Bion, W. (1967) Notes on memory and desire. In Joseph Aguayo and Barnet Malin (Eds.) *Wilfred Bion: Los Angeles Seminars and Supervision*. London: Karnac, 2013. Appendix, pages 133-149. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

Recommended: **Ogden, T.** (2015) Intuiting the truth of what's happening: On Bion's "Notes on Memory and Desire." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. 84: 285-306. [PEP Web Link](#)

7. November 12. **Late Bion: Receptivity to the unknown; emotional turbulence, transformation, and growth**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify elements of the analyst's internal setting that permit relinquishing saturated ideas, support opening oneself up to the *emotional turbulence* in the here and now of the session, and lead to transformation and growth in the patient.

Bion, W. (1997) *Taming Wild Thoughts*. London: Karnac, pages 27-51. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Recommended: **Bion, W.** (1976) Emotional turbulence. In *Clinical Seminars and Other Works*. London: Karnac, 1994. Pages 295-305. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

8. November 19. **Transformations in O**

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to compare "early Bion" with "late Bion" through their discussion of Bion's theoretical and technical movement from transformations in K to transformations in O, a long journey into unknown and unmapped mental life.

Bergstein, Avner. (2018) The Psychotic Part of the Mind: Bion's Expeditions into Unmapped Mental Life. *JAPA*, 66(2), 193-220. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]

Recommended: **Bion, W.** (1970) Attention and Interpretation. London: Heinemann, pages 62-82. Chapters 6 "The Mystic and the Group" and 7 "Container-Contained." In *Seven Servants*. NY: Jason Aronson, 1977. [Available in the library: Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsl.org.]