



**Video Seminar: Observation of Infants and Young Children
Child Psychoanalysis, BPSI
Fall 2021, Monday evenings, 8:00 pm**

**Instructors: Sarah Birss, MD
Alexandra Harrison MD**

Overview:

Observation of infants with parents was started at Tavistock in London and has been used for over 50 years to teach about development of the earliest relationship, as well as to look at early developmental capacities of the infant, and to learn about development as a process involving the infant and child in their caregiving relationships. Infant observation has been used in psychoanalytic training to help therapists learn analytic techniques related: to watching and waiting, as opposed to intervening; becoming attuned to early communications through attention to non-verbal behaviors; and gaining awareness of the interactive nature of nonverbal as well as verbal communication.

In this class we will use videos to show the development of relationships of infants and young children. We will look at videos of young children in interaction as examples of “normal” or typical development. We will also look at videos of young children in therapeutic situations to highlight the importance of both verbal and nonverbal communications in treatment of children. We will also discuss readings of classic infant observation papers and of current scientific knowledge of developmental research.

We have included one required reading, one optional reading, and a list of some (of many) other readings for further exploration at the end of the syllabus.

Class 1: Monday, September 13, 2021
Transition to Parenthood/ Matrescence

We will discuss the developmental aspects of becoming a parent, and the developmental stage of “Matrescence.”

Video in class: To Be Decided
Power point of Matrescence

Reading (s):

Birksted-Breen, D. (2000). The experience of having a baby: a developmental view. In Raphael-Leff, J. (ed.) *Spilt Milk: perinatal loss and breakdown*. (pp. 17-27). London: Institute of Psychoanalysis. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Optional: Stern, D. (1995) Motherhood Constellation, chapter 11 *The Motherhood Constellation*, pp. 171-190 New York: Basic Books. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Optional: Raphael, D. (1975) Matrescence, Becoming a Mother, A “New/Old” Rite de Passage, in *Being Female: Reproduction, Power and Change*, D. Raphael, Ed. Paris: Mouton Publishers, pp. 65-71. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Optional video to view on your own: Alexandra Sachs TED Talk on Matrescence:
https://www.ted.com/talks/alexandra_sachs_a_new_way_to_think_about_the_transition_to_motherhood

Class 2: Monday September 20, 2021
Introduction to Infant Observation

We will discuss the Tavistock model of Infant Observation as a method of observing the development of the earliest relationship between a mother and infant, with attention to the nonverbal interactions and the observer’s use of countertransference feelings.

Tavistock Video in class: First moments of mother with newborn

Reading (s):

Waddell, M. (2006) Infant Observation in Britain: The Tavistock Approach. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 87(4):1103-1120. [PEP Web Link](#).

Optional: Symington, J. (2002) Mrs. Bick and Infant Observation. In *Surviving Space: Papers on Infant Observation*, Ed. By A. Briggs (Chapter 6, pp. 105-116). London: Karnac. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Class 3: Monday September 27
Recognizing Infant Behavioral Cues

Video in class: Infant Behavioral Cues

Reading(s):

Stern D. N (1998) *Diary of a Baby, Introduction and Part I: The World of Feelings: Joey at Six Weeks*. NY: Basic Books, pp. 1-43. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Class 4: Monday October 4, 2021
Early Face to Face Dialogue/Protoconversation/Beginnings of Intersubjectivity

Tavistock Video in class: 8 weeks—Distress and comfort
10 weeks—Baby and mother

Reading (s):

Trevarthen, C. (1974/2002) Conversations with a two month old. In Raphael-Leff (Ed.) *Parent-Infant Psychodynamics*. Chapter 3, pp. 25-34. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Optional: Winnicott, D.W. (2003) Mirror-role of mother and family in child development. Chapter 2, In J. Raphael-Leff (Ed.) *Parent-Infant Psychodynamics* London: Whurr Publishers, pp. 18 – 24, or Chapter 9, In Winnicott, D.W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock Publications, pp. 111-118. [PEP Web Link](#).

NOTE: NO CLASS Monday October 11, Indigenous Peoples' Day (Columbus Day)

Class 5: Monday October 18, 2021
Emotional signaling and Joint Attention

Tavistock Video in class: Almost 1 year old (50 weeks) and mother, communication by pointing

Reading(s): Video Tavistock joint attention

Sander, L. (2008) Paradox and Resolution from the Beginning. Chapter 8 in *Living Systems, Evolving Consciousness, and the Emerging Person: A Selection of Papers from the Life Work of Louis Sander*. Psychoanalytic Inquiry Book Series, pp. 168- 176. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Tronick, E. (2003) Emotions and Emotional Communication in Infants. Chapter 4 in Raphael-Leff, (Ed.) *Parent-Infant Psychodynamics* London: Whurr Publishers, pp.35 -53. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Optional video to view on your own: Joseph Campos showing the visual cliff and maternal emotional signaling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6cqNhHrMJA>

Class 6: Monday October 25, 2021
Discovering other's minds

Video in class: Wernicke and Tomasello altruism

Reading(s):

O'Madagain, C. & Tomasello, M. (2021) Joint Attention to mental content and the social origin of reasoning. *Synthese* 198: 4057-4078. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Optional: Reddy, V. (2008). Experiencing Attention. In *How infants know minds* (Chapter 6, pp. 90-119). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Class 7: Monday November 1

Clinical example: Emotional and Verbal communication in treatment

Video in class: Autistic child in treatment

Reading(s):

Harrison, A.M. & Beebe, B. (2018). Rhythms of Dialogue in Infant Research and Child Analysis: Implicit and Explicit Forms of Therapeutic Action, *Psychoanal. Psychol.* 35(4):367-381. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Optional: Furman, E. (1992) On Feeling and Being Felt with. *PSC*, 47:67-84. [PEP Web Link](#).

Class 8: Monday November 8, 2021

Attachment and Culture

Video in class: Videos Pakistan, El Salvador

Reading(s):

Keller, Heidi (2013) Attachment and Culture, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychol.* 44(2):175-194. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Optional: Music, G. (2014) Struggling with cultural prejudice while observing babies socio-centric and egocentric positions. Chapter 14 In Thomson-Salo, F. (Ed.) *Infant Observation*. London, Karnac, pp. 267-283. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Supplemental References for future readings:

1. Transition to Parenthood/ Matrescence

Birss, S.A. (2007). Transition to Parenthood: Promoting the Parent-Infant Relationship, Chapter 2 in J.K. Nugent et al, *Understanding Newborn Behavior and Early Relationships: The Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) Systems Handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Diamond, Michael J. (2007) *My Father Before Me*. Chapter 1, Fatherhood on the Horizon (pp. 13-23) NY, W.W. Norton & Co. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Raphael-Leff, J. (1993) *Pregnancy: The inside story*. Chapter 1: Conceived Fantasies. (pp. 7-25). London: Karnac. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Rustin, M. (2002). *Becoming a Mother: Reflections from a Clinical and Observational Standpoint*. Unpublished paper: Tavistock Clinic, London, pp.1 -11. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Smith, J.M. (2014) The spare room: a father confronts his fatherhood. Epilogue in *The Baby as Subject*, P. Campbell and F. Thomson-Salo, Eds., London: Karnac, pp. 289-295. (Script of a fictional short dramatic performance.) [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Stern, D. and Bruschweiler-Stern, N. (1998) *The Birth of a Mother*. New York: Basic Books. Ch. 11, Husbands and Fathers, pp. 214 – 230. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Rosemary Balsam, Nancy Chodorow, Alexandra Sachs video on Matrescence

2. Infant Observation, Tavistock Model

Bick, E. (1964) Notes on infant observation in psycho-analytic training, reprinted in *Surviving Space*, 2002, Andrew Briggs, Ed., London: Karnac, Chapter 2, pp.37-54. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Bick, E. (1968) The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations. *IJP* 49:484-486. [PEP Web Link](#).

Magagna, J. (2002) Three years of observation with Mrs. Bick. In S. Briggs (Ed.) *Surviving Space* London: Karnac Books, pp. 75-104. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Sternberg, J. (2005) *Infant Observation at the Heart of Training*. Chapter 5: Feel the music: How infant observation develops equipment for clinical work. London, Karnac, pp. 84-122. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Winnicott, D.W. (1975) Primary Maternal Preoccupation, Chapter XXIV in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, NY: Basic Books, Inc., pp. 300-305. [PEP Web Link](#).

Werbart, A. (2019) “The Skin is the Cradle of the Soul”: Didier Anzieu, The Skin-Ego, Boundaries, and Boundlessness. *JAPA*, 67(1):37-58. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

3. Recognizing Infant Behavioral Cues

Nugent, J.K., Keefer, C.H. Minear, S, Johnson, L.C., Blanchard, Y. (2007) *Understanding Newborn Behavior and Early Relationships: The Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) Systems Handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. [Can be requested from the [library](#) by BPSI members and partners].

Stern, D. (1985) *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, New York: Basic Books, Chapter 1, Exploring the Infant's Subjective Experience, pp. 3 – 12. Chapter 2, Perspectives and Approaches to Infancy, pp. 13 – 34. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

4. **Early Aspects of Regulation; Early Face to Face Dialogue / Protoconversation / Beginnings of Intersubjectivity**

Beebe, Beatrice (2004) Co-Constructing Mother-Infant Distress in Face-to-Face Interactions: Contributions of Microanalysis, *Zero to Three*, May 2004, pp. 40-48. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Sander, L. Issues in early mother-child interaction. Chapter 1 in G. Amadei and I. Bianchi, (2008) *Living Systems, Evolving Consciousness, and the Emerging Person. A Selection of Papers from the life work of Louis Sander*, The Analytic Press, New York, pp. 3 - 24. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

5. **Emotional signaling and Joint Attention**

Sorce, J.F., Emde, R.N., Campos, J., Klinnert, M.D. (1985) Maternal Signaling: Its Effect on the Visual Cliff Behavior of 1 –Year-Olds. *Developmental Psychology*, 21(1):195- 200. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

6. **Discovering other's minds**

Hobson, P. (2002) *Cradle of Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press. [Can be requested from the [library](#) by BPSI members and partners].

Reddy, V. (2008). *How infants know minds*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Can be requested from the [library](#) by BPSI members and partners].

Tomasello, M. (2008) Ontogenetic Origins, In *Origins of Human Communication* (Chapter 4, pp. 109-167). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

7. **Emotional and Verbal Communication in Treatment**

Lyons-Ruth, K. (1999) The two-person unconscious: Intersubjective dialogue, enactive relational representation, and the emergence of new forms of relational organization. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 19:576-617. [PEP Web Link](#).

8. **Attachment and Culture**

Maiello, S. (2000). The cultural dimension in early mother-infant interaction and psychic development: An infant observation in South Africa. *International Journal of Infant Observation*, 3(2):80-92.

Small, M.F. (1999) *Our Babies, Ourselves: How Biology and Culture Shape the Way We Parent*. Chapter 3 (pp. 71-108): *Other Parents, Other Ways*. New York: Anchor Books. [Can be requested from the [library](#) by BPSI members and partners].