

Seattle Psychoanalytic Society and Institute
BRITISH OBJECT RELATIONS
Year Three Psychoanalytic Training

Instructors:

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First Trimester: September 7 - November 16, 2018
Friday: 1:45-3:15pm

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the Associates will be able to:

- Describe the fundamental concepts of BOR theory.
- Demonstrate increased capacity to recognize the analytic process through the here and now transference/countertransference experience.
- Empathize with the complexities of emotional experience as known through primitive mechanisms such as projective identification, and
- Formulate an understanding of the need for an analytic frame and setting from a British Object Relations perspective, contributing to increased containment and improved clinical outcomes.

Explanation and Requirements of Course:

British Object Relations is a theory born from creative and political controversy. It is also a living theory insofar as it continues to evolve with many branches born from the same trunk. There are many excellent thinkers within the larger Object Relations tradition that we will not be covering. Our intention with this short course is to provide you with the fundamental building blocks of the theory. Our rationale is that if you have a working-sense of the fundamentals you can choose further studies from an informed position. Having taught this theory for many years we have come to the conclusion that it is best to go with a “less is more” approach. The theory is actually quite elegantly simple but when first encountered it can feel implausible, overwhelming and unruly.

It is our expectation that you will read the article(s) for each class at least two times, three times would be ideal. This allows for optimal learning and informed discussion.

Reflection Papers - Associates will be asked to write and turn in a **one** page reflection paper each week on the assigned readings. The purpose of this paper is to help facilitate integration of the material. It is NOT meant to be conclusive or academic but rather an opportunity to interact with the readings in a manner that is meaningful to you. Each student decides for him/herself what will be most useful, i.e. the paper could consist of questions that arise for you from the readings, or you may wish to elaborate your own thinking in regards to one of the themes, or you may want to write about a case that you think might illustrate some of the key points of that week’s topic. The Instructors

will offer written reflections on each paper and will return the papers to each student the following week. Papers may also be used to inform our discussion during the seminar.

Week 1: September 7, 2018

Introduction to Melanie Klein's Conception of Psychoanalytic Technique

- Klein, Melanie, Edited by John Steiner. (2017) *Lectures on Techniques by Melanie Klein*, Ch. 1, "Guiding Principles," pgs. 29-41. (not on Pep-Web)
- Money-Kyrle, Roger, (1963) *The Collected Papers of Roger Money-Kyrle*, Ch. 30, "British Schools of Psycho-analysis: Melanie Klein and Her Contribution to Psycho-analysis," pgs. 408-415

Technique is a set of prescribed procedures for analyst and patient designed to facilitate making the unconscious conscious. Consistency and regularity of setting, time boundaries and frequency of sessions are emphasized, together with the importance of the analyst maintaining a receptive but discriminating attitude of mind. Klein took up Freud's concept of *transference*, meaning the conscious but also unconscious expression of past and present experiences, relationships, thoughts, phantasies and feelings, both positive and negative, in relation to the analyst. She valued the importance of the *negative transference*, which she thought could be usefully worked with provided it was recognized and understood by the analyst. Klein emphasized the role in the transference of the 'total situation' of the patient's past and present experiences. She also perceived the patient's anxiety as the starting point for the analyst's understanding of the patient's unconscious phantasies and she regarded the analyst's *interpretation* as the main tool of analytic therapy.

Week 2: September 14, 2018

Unconscious Phantasy

- Isaacs, S. (1948). The Nature and Function of Phantasy. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 29:73-97. (Available on PEP-web)
- Movie: *Where the Wild Things Are*

Presented in 1943 as a pivotal contribution to the 'Controversial Discussions', this paper articulated a new and wider definition of phantasy (differentiated from 'fantasy' to specify its unconscious nature). Isaacs built on Klein's clinical insights to construct a conceptual framework for the study of emotional and cognitive development. In a break with the Freudian tradition she claimed that phantasy was present from the beginning of life. In fact, emanating from earliest bodily experience, phantasies are seen as rudimentary thought processes, from which will spring object relations, language and self-awareness.

Points she made include:

- The transference situation is almost entirely a construct of unconscious phantasy.
- External realities are progressively woven into the texture of phantasy. And progressively elaborated. But the source of phantasy is internal, in the instinctual impulses.
- Phantasy is taken to represent the subject's psychic reality (not mere wish fulfilment). The inner world has a continuous reality of its own.
- There is no impulse, no instinctual urge or response that is not experienced as unconscious phantasy.

Week 3: September 21, 2018

Paranoid-Schizoid Position and the Depressive Position.

- Leikermann, M. (2001) *Melanie Klein: Her Work in Context*, Ch. 10 "A Kind of Detached Hostility: The Paranoid Schizoid Position," pgs. 144-155 and Ch. 8 "Loss of the Loved Object: Ambivalence and Depressive States," pgs. 100-111. (not on PEP-web)
- Britton, R. (1998) *Belief and Imagination: Explorations in Psychoanalysis*, Ch. 6 "Before and After the Depressive Position: $Ps(n) > D(n) > Ps(n+1)$," pgs. 69-81.

Melanie Klein has described the earliest stages of infantile psychic life in terms of a successful completion of development through certain *positions*. A position, for Klein, is a set of psychic functions that correspond to a given phase of development, appearing during the first year of life, but which are present at all times thereafter and can be reactivated at any time. There are two major positions: the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position. The earlier more primitive position is the paranoid-schizoid position and if an individual's environment is adequate, she or he will progress through the depressive position. The two positions are comprised of a fundamental anxiety and its defense.

Week 4: September 28, 2018

Early Development

- Winnicott, D. W. (1951). *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis: Collected Papers*, Ch. 17 "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," pgs. 229-242. (Available on PEP-web, book section)

Winnicott starts by examining the first 'not-me' possession of the infant, and the wide variations in the infant's relationship to this possession. Winnicott defines a transitional object as hallucination taken for granted because of the immaturity of the infant, and 'transition' to be a transition from one kind of experience to another. The phenomena occur at times of anxiety, at which time an object becomes vitally important for the infant for use in its defense. Winnicott summarizes the qualities of the object: among

other things, that the infant assumes rights over it, that it is cuddled and mutilated, that it must never change, and that its fate is to be gradually decathected. Winnicott discusses these phenomena in relation to tension around the gratification of instincts, the pleasure-pain principle, introjection and projection, symbol formation, and the depressive position. He states that only if there are good internal objects can the infant use transitional objects, which are intermediate between internal and external. Winnicott's formulations help the psychoanalyst understand the need for consistent "environmental" provisions such as a steady frame and times of "bearing witness" rather than interpretation.

Week 5: October 5, 2018

Projective Identification, Transference and Countertransference

- Carlson, S. (2009) *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 96(6) "Whose Hate is It? Encountering Emotional Turbulence in the Cross-Currents of Projective Identification and Countertransference Experience," pgs. 895-916. (available on PEP-web)

In this paper Sue takes up a particularly disturbing and confusing countertransference experience she had in relation to a patient whom she saw in psychoanalysis four times per week. She wrote about this experience because it was unique in its intensity and lent itself to her goal of studying and thinking about an aspect of her development as a psychoanalyst. Sue wondered about the use of the analyst's mind and sensory/somatic experience as a resonating instrument, one that might be relied upon with some degree of reliability to understand what was occurring in transference and countertransference. The concepts of projective identification and countertransference are defined. The evolving definitions of these theoretical concepts and how they informed changes in emphasis of technique within the Kleinian (post-Kleinian) school of thought were considered.

What does it mean to be impacted by a patient? Can the analyst's use of her private thoughts and feelings be a means of detecting the transference?

Week 6: October 12, 2018

The Claustum (Pathological Internal States of Mind)

- Miller, J.F. (2013) *The Triumphant Victim*, Ch. 7 "Projective Identification and the Claustum," pgs. 45-58. (not on PEP-web)

Donald Meltzer was a significant if less recognized theorist in the Kleinian tradition. His original contributions to psychoanalysis grew particularly from his capacities for very detailed clinical observation and his involvement in child analysis. In his paper 'The relation of anal masturbation to projective identification' (1965) he set out a view of an intrusive form of projective identification that was related to a failure of authentic

development and consequent identity confusion. These ideas were more fully revisited in *The Claustrium*, which elaborated his understanding of the functioning of anti-developmental forces in the mind, sometimes functioning in gang-like mode, and the sealed-off quality of a personality based on this avoidance of awareness of dependence on the object.

Week 7: October 19, 2018

- Ricard, R. (Presented at EBOR Conference 2008). "When Sleeping Dogs Lie: When Caution Becomes Collusion." This Paper is Confidential and not to be distributed without Author's permission. (not on PEP-web)

This paper is about Rikki's work with a very difficult patient in analysis. It's a paper of exploration and question. Questions about both the analyst's and the patient's experience as the relationship progressed. As the writing of this paper moved forward, the title changed from "Letting Sleeping Dogs Lie" to "When Sleeping Dogs Lie." This change reflects the author's realization that she found herself thinking about the experience of the lie as it shows up in the analytic setting with a particularly disturbed patient. It also became quite clear that there were dogs in the patient, angry dogs, and although they were seemingly asleep, there became a realization that the work was supporting that and the question of waking them up became central to the work. Was the analytic caution becoming a collusion that supported a very destructive state of mind?

With the help of many other minds who have travelled these terrains before - Rosenfeld, Bion, Caper, O'Shaunessey, and most particularly Meltzer and his notion of the Claustrium - the author began to gather her mind back and to at the very least find some understanding of the mental landscape that needed to be travelled.

The paper will bring a number of ideas forward around dealing with a patient that seems unable to tolerate help in any fashion. It will also explore what Meltzer means by the Claustrium and what it feels like to work with someone who may indeed be caught in this kind of mental space.

Week 8: October 26, 2018

Working with Countertransference Experience.

- Pick, I. B., Ed. By Spillius, E. B. (1985) *Melanie Klein Today: Developments in Theory and Practice Vol. 2: Mainly Practice*, "Working Through in the Countertransference," Ch. 3 "Working Through in the Counter-transference," pgs. 34-47. (not on PEP-web)

How does the analyst work with that which disturbs him/her? This paper addresses the task of coping with strong countertransference experiences and of maintaining the

analytic technique of interpretation. The process of transformation within the analyst is considered and how the patient is consciously or unconsciously aware of whether the analyst evades or confronts the issues. The contention that the analyst is not affected by these experiences is false and would convey to the patient that his/her plight, pain, and behavior are emotionally ignored by the analyst. It is suggested that if emotions are kept out, the analyst is in danger of keeping out the love that mitigates the hatred, allowing the so-called pursuit of truth to be governed by hatred. How the analyst allows him/herself to have the experiences, work through them, and transform them into a useful interpretation is discussed.

Week 9: November 2, 2018

Trauma and Disassociation

- Newirth, J., Edited by Howell & Itzkowitz. (2016) *The Dissociative Mind in Psychoanalysis*, Ch. 9, "A Kleinian Perspective on Dissasociation and Trauma," pgs. 107-117. (not on PEP-web)

The traditional Kleinian perspective would suggest that traumatic experience is traumatic to the degree that it activates the fear of annihilation and destruction that is always waiting within, the haunting presence of the death instinct. Fearing death, the traumatized person projects his/her fear outward into persecutory objects and people, who then come back to haunt him/her. We compare this view with the idea that through the use of countertransference, projective identification, and enactment the analyst may come to gain a deeper understanding of a patient's disowned and disassociated experience. How does this view fit in with contemporary trauma theory?

Week 10: November 9, 2018

Considering Intersectionality in the Psychoanalytic Setting.

- White, K. P. (2002) *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 38(3). "Surviving Hating and Being Hated: Some Personal Thoughts about Racism from a Psychoanalytic Perspective," pgs. 401-422. Available on PEP-Web.

Kleinian theory provides a nuanced view regarding an understanding of the human condition of hatred. What has been missing is the cultural significance and impact of being hated, of hating the self and of hating the other. This is a vitally important addition to consider in our work.

Week 11: November 16, 2018

Klein's Theory Reviewed

- Klein, M. (1963) *Envy and Gratitude & Other Works: 1956-1963*, Ch. 16 "On the Sense of Loneliness," pgs. 300-313. (Available on PEP-web, book section)

This is Klein's last paper, unpublished at her death in 1960. In this paper, Melanie Klein applies her theoretical thinking to the experience of loneliness. This paper demonstrates her mature thinking and allows for an integrating experience of the theory as applied to clinical issues.