

**THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE  
141 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459**

**Seminar Year II  
Spring 2017**

**Object Relations**

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Our aim in this seminar is to introduce you to the origins of a psychoanalytic approach emphasizing the phenomena of object relations. It was and is a group of approaches, now encompassing a very wide range of views. We will try to show how this important strand of psychoanalytic thought and practice emerged primarily in England in the 1930's and 40's—though its creators prominently included psychoanalysts from the Continent and Scotland. We will pay particular attention to the early work of Melanie Klein, tracing her influence on Joan Riviere, D.W. Winnicott and W.R.D. Fairbairn, and studying their own highly original contributions. We will also take up papers from the same period of time, written by the Hungarian colleagues of Sandor Ferenczi, Michael Balint and Alice Balint. And finally we will consider the work of John Bowlby, whose new orientation to the problems of early childhood development which had preoccupied Klein and these others, radically shifted the emphasis on object relations, from relations with objects of the inner world to those of the external world.

Seminar dates: 4-6, 4-13, 4-20, 4-27, 5-4, 5-11, 5-18, 5-25.

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](#)

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

**Learning objective:** Students will be able to describe the novel play techniques which Melanie Klein developed for the psychoanalytic treatment of young children, as well as the assumptions she brought to her work, and how the combination of these led to surprising findings about the onset and content of very early anxieties. Students will be able to explain how the picture of mental dynamics and development which Freud outlined in his 1917 paper, 'Mourning and Melancholia', set the stage for the picture of early mental life which Mrs. Klein began to sketch in the 1920's.

## Week 2

Klein, M. (1929). Personification in the play of children. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-1945, 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 psycho-analysis 1921-1945, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental reading: Klein, M. (1930). The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego. In M. Klein (1968), Contributions to psycho-analysis 1921-1945, 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 to express their mental life led naturally to personification of their wishes and anxieties—and thereby a shift toward psychoanalytic description of their instinctual drives and fears in terms of imagined events taking place between themselves and their objects.

## Week 3

Riviere, J. (1936). On the genesis of psychical conflict in earliest infancy. In J. Riviere (Ed.) (1952), Developments in psycho-analysis, London, Hogarth Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Riviere, J. (1952). The unconscious phantasy of an inner world as reflected in examples from literature. In M. Klein, P. Heimann, and R.E. Money-Kyrle (1955), New directions in psycho-analysis: the significance of infant conflict in the pattern of adult behaviour, London, Tavistock Publications. [PEP Web Link](#)

**Learning objective:** Students will be able to describe and explain the controversial views on early child development which had emerged by the 1930's from Melanie Klein's clinical and theoretical work, as they were presented by Joan Riviere in an effort toward clarification and understanding between the Kleinian and Anna Freudian positions, in a lecture given in Vienna in 1936.

## Week 4

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](#)

Balint, A. (1939). Love for the mother and mother love. In M. Balint (1965), Primary love and psycho-analytic technique, New York, Liveright. [PEP Web Link](#)

**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 late 1920's and 1930's between psychoanalysts in Vienna and London, regarding the typical contents (and thus, the abilities) characteristic of the mental lives of infants and very young children. In particular,

students will be able to explain M. Balint's reasons for rejecting the assumption of the existence of a developmental phase of 'primary narcissism'.

### Week 5

Winnicott, D.W. (1935). The manic defense. In D.W. Winnicott (1958), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1945). Primitive emotional development. In D.W. Winnicott (1958), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

**Learning Objective:** Students will be able to describe how Donald Winnicott, a practicing pediatrician as well as psychoanalyst, initially made use of Melanie Klein's work suggesting the existence of an inner world of fantasy. They will then be able to compare his 'Primitive Emotional Development' paper (the subject of Ogden's paper), written only ten years later, and to describe how substantially he had changed his orientation.

### Week 6

Winnicott, D.W. (1948). Paediatrics and psychiatry. In D.W. Winnicott (1958), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Winnicott, D.W. (1951) Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In D.W. Winnicott (1958), Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis, New York, Basic Books. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental reading: Winnicott, D.W. (1954). Metapsychological and clinical aspects of regression within the psycho-analytical set-up. In D.W. Winnicott, (1958), 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 psychoanalysis, 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 7

Fairbairn, W.R.D. (1943). The repression and return of bad objects (with special reference to the 'war neuroses'). In W.R.D. Fairbairn (1952), Psychoanalytic studies of the personality, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Supplemental reading: 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](#)

**Learning objective:** Students will be able to describe and critically evaluate W.R.D. Fairbairn's account of the clinical observations and theoretical reasoning which led him to formulate an alternative to Freud's metapsychology and theory of psychical structure, which he called an 'object relations theory of personality'.

### Week 8

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

Bowlby, J. (1960). Separation anxiety. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 41:89-113. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental reading: Bowlby, J., Figlio, K., and Young, R.M. An interview with John Bowlby on the origins and reception of his work. Free Associations, 1:36-64. [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 (particularly those of Melanie Klein and Anna Freud) regarding the nature of early attachment to mother and the consequences of disruption of that attachment.