

**INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS**

**OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY: THE CRITICAL THINKERS**

**WEEKEND PSYCHOANALYTIC TRAINING PROGRAM 2020-2021**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Lynda Chassler, PH.D; L.C.S.W.@lyndaphd@aol.com

**MEETING TIME:** Fridays, 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m; Sundays 8:30 a.m. -11:a.m.

**MEETING DATES:** 2020: 9/11, 9/13; 10/23, 10/25; 12/4, 12/6;

2021: 1/29, 1/31; 3/19, 3/21; 4/30, 5/2

**HOURS OF INSTRUCTION:** 2.5 hour sessions x 12 meetings = 30 hours

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Beginning with Freud's drive/structural theory, the impact of early relationships and the way they influence our psychological growth and development was seen by classical analysts as libidinal energy seeking object contact solely to achieve the gratification of the drives. Treatment focused on the analysis of symptoms that suggested the person had reached the Oedipal Level of development, a 3 party relationship, the child, the mother, and the father. Conflict and ambivalence were central and the resolution of these struggles was the primary goals of the analysis. People whose symptoms suggested earlier mother-child struggles during the phases of dependency (a 2 party relationship) were considered to be unanalyzable and when these issues emerged in treatment, were interpreted by the analyst as a defense away from the Oedipal struggle. Psychoanalytic inquiry that was significant in the understanding of regressed preoedipal states came from the field of Object Relations. Object relations theory addresses the observation that people live in two worlds simultaneously—the external world and the internal world with a co-mingling between the two. Individuals tend to act and react not only with an actual other but also an internal other, a psychic representation of a person which in itself has the power to influence both the individual's affective states and his or her

**behavioral reactions. Essential consideration is given to the primary role of objects, the mother, a 2-party relationship, critical in the psychological/emotional development of the infant from birth. Although each of the early thinkers had a different language, their major question remained the same: Were the mother's responses good enough to engender a sense of well-being and safety within the infant to promote psychological growth or were the deficiencies such that the infant experienced their survival needs of safety and protection threatened so that the specific felt anxieties of annihilation, dread, and terror compromised his/her healthy development from states of dependency toward independence.**

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Object relations theory addresses the observation that people live in two worlds simultaneously—the external world and the internal world with a co-mingling between the two. Individuals tend to act and react not only with an actual other but also an internal other, a psychic representation of a person which in itself has the power to influence both the individual's affective states and his or her behavioral reactions. The evolution of object relations theory has been subject to divergent theoretical perspectives which are complex and often difficult to integrate. This theoretical dissension has caused continued confusion and ambiguity with regard to the meaning and formation of objects in both the mental and psychological development of the individual. How does our internal world evolve? What motivates the person to seek an object—the gratification of instinctual wishes or the desire for relationships? How does the child's important early relationships become internalized and impact the person's on going relational patterns? These are just three of the numerous questions discussed by the different authors who have contributed to the development of object relations theory. This course will compare and integrate the nature of the object, its origins and qualities, in the context of the formulations of these different theorists with a focus on their clinical applications.**

**SESSION #1:**

- 1. Summarize the essential ideas of the object relations theorists**
- 2. Explain, for Suttie, the most important aspect of mental development.**
- 3. Describe Suttie's views on psychopathology.**

**SESSION #2**

- 1. Describe the natural expression of love, on the part of children.**
- 2. Explain Ferenczi's revolutionary idea as it relates to the patient and the analyst.**
- 3. Address Ferenczi's major contribution to object relations theory.**

**SESSION #3**

- 1. Explain Klein's theory of the Paranoid-Schizoid Position.**
- 2. Summarize some of the disturbed object relations, which are found in the paranoid/schizoid personalities.**
- 3. Address the essential idea of the Depressive Position as a development achievement.**

**SESSION # 4**

- 1. Define Klein's language of interpretation**
- 2. Describe Klein's the meaning of Phantasy**
- 3. Write about the term Projective Identification**

**SESSION #5**

- 1. Define the fundamental motivational force in Fairbairn's concept of libido.**
- 2. Describe the basic endopsychic structure.**
- 3. Explore analytic treatment, according to Fairbairn.**

**SESSION #6**

- 1. Define Guntrip's "passive regressed libidinal ego."**
- 2. Describe the schizoid in-and-out compromise.**
- 3. Explore the aim of therapy for Guntrip.**

**SESSION #7**

- 1. Explain the essential issues in The Freud-Klein Controversies (1941-1945).**
- 2. Describe the terms “Primary Love” and the “Basic Fault”.**
- 3. Explore the Describe the concepts “Ocnophilla” and “Philobatism.”**

**SESSION #8**

- 1. Define how Balint viewed transference and interpretations when treating patients who have regressed to the basic fault.**
- 2. Explain the terms benign and malignant regression**
- 3. Describe how the analyst should manage the regression at the basic fault.**

**SESSION #9**

- 1. Define the concept “good-enough mother.”**
- 2. Explain the function of the “holding environment.”**
- 3. Describe the concept “Primary Maternal Preoccupation.”**

**SESSION #10**

- 1. Define the terms “True Self”/”False Self”**
- 1. Explain the function of the “Transitional Object”.**
- 2. Describe Winnicott’s view of psychopathology.**

**SESSION #11**

- 1. Define Hartman Hartman’s concepts of adaptedness, processes of adaptation, and average expectable environment.**
- 2. Describe Mahler’s concepts of “symbiosis.”**
- 3. Explain Mahler’s sub-phases of the separation-individuation process.**

**SESSION #12**

- 1. Define the term “contradictory ego states”.**
- 2. Explain Kernberg’s stages of normal development.**
- 3. Describe Kernberg’s psychoanalytic classification of character pathology.**

**READINGS:**

Most of the Readings can be downloaded from the Pep Web. The following reading is not on Pep and will be e-mailed to you:

Ferenczi, S., (1928) "The Elasticity of the Psycho-Analytic Technique" in **Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis**, Brunner/Mazel, New York.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SESSION-BY- SESSION**

Session #1: 9/11/20

**An Overview of Object Relations Theory and the Concepts of Ian Suttie**

We will begin the course with an overview of object relations theory and the essential ideas of the major contributors to its development. We will then focus on the major ideas of Suttie whose basic concept is the innate human need for companionship, the satisfaction of which he regarded as identical to that in nonsexual loving relationships and to a sense of security, and that all of these derived from the earliest interactions between the baby and it 's mother. His ideas anticipated those of Fairbairn, Guntrip, Balint, Winnicott and Bowlby.

**READINGS:**

Bacal , H. (1990). Introduction and Overview. In H. A. Bacal & K.M. Newman(Authors), **Theories of object relations:Bridges to self psychology** (pp. 1 - 14). New York: Columbia University Press.

Ian Suttie in In H. A. Bacal & K.M. Newman(Authors), **Theories of object relations: Bridges to self psychology** (pp. 17-27). New York: Columbia University Press.

**SUPPLEMENTAL READING:**

Suttie, I.D. (1935). The Origins of Love and Hate. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truber.

Session #2: 9/13/20

**The Contributions of Sandor Ferenczi**

We will look at the Influence of S. Ferenczi, The Mother of Psychoanalysis and his

contributions to object relations theory. Colleague, confidant, analysand, heir apparent, and enfant terrible to Freud, Ferenczi's psychoanalytic ideas, unique in their time, were honored, maligned, discredited, discounted, rediscovered, redeemed, and even idealized (some); they were always and remain to this day, highly controversial.

**READINGS:**

Ferenczi, S., (1928) "The Elasticity of the Psycho-Analytic Technique" in Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis, Brunner/Mazel, New York.

Ferenczi, S., (1931). "Child-Analysis in the Analysis of Adults." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 12:468-482

Ferenczi, S., (1949). "Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 30:225-230.

Session # 3: 10/23/20

**The Ideas of Melanie Klein**

Klein's early period produced great work of empirical clinical discovery, which included findings at variance with some of Freud's views and findings. Then came her later period of theory building with its delineation of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, a new understanding of anxiety, and new ideas about the importance of envy and gratitude in primary experiences of object relations.

**READINGS:**

Spillius, E.B., (1994). Developments In Kleinian Thought: Overview and Personal View. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 14:324-338.

**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:**

Klein, M. (1946). Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, [27:99-110.

Session #4: 10/25/20

**Melanie Klein (Con't).**

In recent years some central developments in Kleinian thought have emerged: studies in psychosis, theories of thinking and experiencing; projective identification and countertransference, together with developments in technique; and refinements in the conception of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions and use of these conceptions as models.

**READINGS:**

**Spillius, E.B., (1994). Developments In Kleinian Thought: Overview and Personal View. Psychoanal. Inq., 14:338-364.**

Session #5: 12/4/20

**The Relational/Structural Model of W. R. D. Fairbairn**

Fairbairn provides the clearest expression of the shift from the heart of Freudian metapsychology, with recasting and reorientation of libido theory on the basic principle that libido is not pleasure seeking but object-seeking. He argues that the object is not only built into the impulse from the start, but that the main characteristic of libidinal energy is its object-seeking quality. Pleasure is not the end goal of the impulse, but a means to its real end-relations with the other. A central principle in Fairbairn's understanding of psychopathology is that all portions of the ego are always joined with objects. Psychopathology is understood as the ego's attempt to perpetuate old ties and hopes represented by internal objects.

**READINGS:**

**Fairbairn, W.R.D. (1952). Repression and the return of bad objects. In Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality. London: Routledge. Chapter 3, pp. 59-81.**

**Fairbairn, W.R.D. (1952). Endopsychic structure considered in terms of object relationships. In Psychoanalytic Studies of Personality. Chapter 4, pp. 82-136. Supplemental Reading:**

**Appel, G.(1974). An Approach to the Treatment of Schizoid Phenomena.  
Psychoanalytic Review,61(1):99-113.**

Session #6: 12/6/20

**Basic Concepts of Harry Guntrip**

Guntrip's own innovation in theory and practice centers on his development of the concept of the "regressed ego." He developed the view "ego weakness" is reflective not just of the withdrawal of libido from external objects, but of the withdrawal of libido from objects altogether, whether external or internal. Guntrip suggests, the regressed ego seeks to return to prenatal security of the womb, to await a rebirth into a more hospitable human environment.

**READINGS:**

**Guntrip, H. (1996). My experience of analysis with Fairbairn and Winnicott (How complete a result does psycho-analytic therapy achieve?) International Journal of Psycho-Analysis,77:739—754.**

**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:**

**Guntrip, H. (1969). The schizoid personality and the external world. In Schizoid Phenomena, Object Relations and the Self. New York: International University Press, Inc. Chapter 1, pp. 17-48.**

**Guntrip, H. (1969). The schizoid problem, regression, and the struggle to preserve an ego. In Schizoid Phenomena, Object Relations and the Self. New York: International University Press, Inc. Chapter 2, pp. 49-86.**

**Plath, S. (1971). The Bell Jar. New York: Harper and Row.**

**Feirstein, F. (2016). A Psychoanalytic Study of Sylvia Plath. Psychoanalytic Review,103 (1):103-121.**

**History and overview of British Psychoanalysis and the formation of The Middle (Independent) School of British Object Relations**

**READINGS**

King, P., Steiner, R. (1991) The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-1945. In P. King & R. Steiner(Eds.), New Library of Psychoanalysis 11:1-92. Read: Section One, The Evolution of Controversies in the British Psychoanalytic Society, Chapter One: Background and Development of the Freud-Klein Controversies in the British Psychoanalytic Society (pp.9-37).

**The Ideas of Michael Balint: Introduction to his work; Theory and Clinical Aspects of Therapeutic Regression.**

Balint rejected Freud's concept of primary narcissism. Rather than the infant at birth being turned inward and focused on the self, Balint believed in the concept of primary love -- that the infant is born in a state of intense relatedness to its early environment. He maintained that a healthy child and healthy mother are so well adapted to each other that the same action inevitably brings gratification to both. He called his preambivalent state of relatedness primary love, or primary object relationship. Inevitably, this ideal state of primary love could not last and it was here that the basic fault arose in the individual's response to the traumatic discovery of frustration and separation from its primary object.

**READINGS:**

Balint, M. (1979). Primary Love. In **The Basic Fault: Therapeutic Aspects of Regression. ( Chapter 12, pp. 64-72).** Tavistock Publications: New York, London.

Balint, M. (1979). The Various Forms of Therapeutic Regression. In **The Basic Fault: Therapeutic Aspects of Regression. ( Chapter22, pp. 138-148).** Tavistock Publications: New York, London.

Balint, M. (1979). Therapeutic Regression, Primary Love, and the Basic Fault. In The Basic Fault: Therapeutic Aspects of Regression ( Chapter 24, pp. 159-172).  
Tavistock Publications: New York, London.

Session #8: 1/31/21

The Ideas of Michael Balint (Continued).

Balint argues that when the problems of the analytic patient derive from the basic fault it is important for the analyst to enable him to regress in the transference, to help the patient develop a primitive relationship in the analytic situation corresponding to his compulsive pattern and maintain it in an undisturbed peace until he can discover the possibility of new forms of forms of object relationship, experience them. And experiment with them...a necessary task of the treatment is to inactivate the basic fault by creating conditions in which it can heal.

Readings:

Balint, M. (1979). The Unobtrusive Analyst. In The Basic Fault: Therapeutic Aspects of Regression ( Chapter 25, pp. 173-181). Tavistock Publications: New York, London.

Bacal, H. (1981). Notes on some therapeutic challenges in the analysis of severely regressed patients. Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 1(1):29-56.

Session : #9: 3/19/21

The Major Contributions of D.W. Winnicott

The Relationship:

Winnicott emphasized the importance of "the maternal-environment-individual set-up" for the growth and development of the baby into a child. The relationship of dependence between child and mother was the critical developmental axis in Winnicott's theory. If the mother is able to perform her functions "good-enough" the infant will begin to experience a sense of continuity of its various need states and a rudimentary sense of integration, personalization, and realization will occur. If all

continues to go well the child has an integrated sense of self over time and differentiated from others.

#### READINGS:

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 37 - 55). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Primary maternal preoccupation. In Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis. (pp. 300 - 305). New York: Basic Books.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). Mirror-role of mother and family in child development. In Playing and reality (pp. 111 - 118). London: Tavistock Publications.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). The capacity to be alone. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 29 - 36). New York: International UNIVERSITIES PRESS.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). From dependence towards independence in the development of the individual. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 83 - 92). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Primitive emotional development. In Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis. (pp. 145 - 156). New York: Basic Books.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). Ego integration in child development. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 56 - 63). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). The development of the capacity for concern. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 73 - 82). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). The use of an object and relating through identifications. In Playing and reality (pp. 86 - 94). London: Tavistock Publications.

Session #10: 3/21/21

### Transitional Phenomena and Creativity:

The concept of transitional phenomena refers to a dimension of living that belongs neither to internal or to external reality; rather, it is the place that both connects and separates inner and outer. Developmentally, transitional phenomena occur from the beginning, even before birth, in relation to the mother-infant dyad. As the infant begins to separate Me from Not-me, he makes use of the transitional object. This necessary developmental journey leads to the use of illusion, the use of symbols, and the use of an object. Transitional phenomena are inextricably linked with playing and creativity. Here is located culture, being, and creativity.

### The Effects of Environmental Failure (The "Not-Good-Enough Mother):

#### Psychopathology and Treatment:

Winnicott's view of psychopathology results from an insufficiently facilitating environment (parental deficiency), that causes the infant or child to react to environmental impingement, and thus arrests the maturational process. All later disturbances in his system involves impairment in the functioning of the self.

#### READINGS:

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In Playing and reality (pp. 1 - 25). London: Tavistock Publications.

Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Metapsychological and Clinical Aspects of Regression within the psycho-analytic set-up. In Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis. (pp. 278 - 294). New York: Basic Books.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). Ego distortions in terms of true and false self. In The maturational process and the facilitating environment (pp. 140 - 152). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1986). Fear of breakdown. In G. Kohon (ed.), The British school of psychoanalysis (pp. 173 - 182). London: Free Association Books.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). Creativity and its origins In Playing and reality (pp. 65 - 85). London: Tavistock Publications.

Grolnick, S. (1990). How to do Winnicottian therapy. In D. Goldman, (Ed.), In one's bones: The clinical genius of Winnicott (pp. 185-212). Northvale, NJ.: Jason Aronson.

Little, M. L. (1990). Psychotherapy with D.W. W., 1949-1955, 1957. In Psychotic anxieties and containment (pp-. 41 - 71). New Jersey: Jason Aronson.

Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Hate in the countertransference. In Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis. (pp. 194 - 203). New York: Basic Books.

Winnicott, D. W. (1975). The antisocial tendency. In Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis. (pp. 306 - 315). New York: Basic Books.

#### THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY

Session #11: 4/30/21

#### The Ideas of Heinz Hartman

With the advent and elaboration of the structural model, new problems arose concerning the individual's relationship with reality. Since the ego is that part of the

mental apparatus that is in contact with the outside, Freud began to place increasing emphasis on its strength and correspondingly, on the role of reality. Heinz Hartman elaborates the psychology of the ego. His concepts of adaptedness and of processes of adaptation pointed toward an inherent relatedness between the individual and his environment; these concepts implied an enhanced view of the structure ego and suggested that direct environmental influence exerted its own dynamic force independent of the activity of drives.

**READINGS:**

Hartman, H. (1958). Adaptation, and "fitting together" : The reality principle, and ego development and adaptation. In Ego psychology and the problem of adaptation. New York: International Universities Press, 22-56.

**The Concepts of Margaret Mahler**

Deriving the concept of inborn capacities from Hartman (1939) she described postnatal ego development in interaction with the "average expectable environment" (Hartman), the maternal object in the dyad. Thus, she shares the view of British object relations theory in the early mother-infant relationship. In a series of papers in the 1960's and 1970's Mahler advanced the idea that the very young human infant is in a state of "symbiosis" with respect to his or her experience of the mother and undergoes an emotionally fraught process through which awareness of separateness is achieved. "Separateness " marks from the sense of oneness with the mother; "individuation," which it accompanies it, marks the infant's taking on individual characteristics, usually characteristics of the mother from whom he or she is developing separateness.

**READINGS:**

Pine,F. (2004. Mahler's Concepts of "Symbiosis" and Separation-individuation: Revisted, Reevaluated, Refined. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 52(2):511-533.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:**

**Bergman, A. Harpaz-Rotem, I. (2004). Revisiting Rapprochement in the Light of Contemporary Development Theories. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 52(2):555-570.**

**Blank, G. & Blank, R. (1994). The Relevance of Mahler's Observational Studies to the Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic Inquiry 14(1):25-41.**

**Dunbar, L. (2009). A Conflict between Distance and Closeness: The Mother's Bittersweet Experience of Becoming Separate from her Toddler. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 78(3):976-979.**

Session #12: 5/2/21

### **The Views of Otto Kernberg**

**Kernberg is the only American psychoanalyst to characterize his own work as "object relations theory," yet rejects the claim by theorists like (Fairbairn and Guntrip) that object relations theory constitutes a general theory of mind, alternative to classical metapsychology. As stated in Greenberg and Mitchell, he limits his usage to "a more restricted approach within the psychoanalytic metapsychology stressing the buildup of dyadic or bipolar intrapsychic representations (self-and object images) as reflections of the original infant-mother relationship and its later development into dyadic, triangular, and multiple internal and external interpersonal relationships..... Kernberg focus as a clinician derived from the psychoanalytic psychotherapy of severely disturbed patients, what he calls "low level character disorders," including narcissistic and personality disorders. These are people, Kernberg observes, who typically become in early, intensively experienced, chaotic transferences in which they experience demonstrate dramatically contradictory attitudes toward the therapist.**

### **READINGS:**

**Kernberg, O. F., (1966). Structural derivatives of object relations. In Object-Relations**

**Theory and Clinical Psychoanalysis, New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., Chapter 1, pp. 23-83.**

**Kernberg, O. F., (1984). A psychoanalytic classification of character pathology. In Object-Relations Theory and Clinical Psychoanalysis, New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., Chapter 5, pp. 142-159.**



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