

Contemporary Object Relations Theory
John DiMartini, PhD November 2, 2018- January 25, 2019

Object relations perspectives have contributed greatly to the contemporary concept of analytic process, reshaping the very structure of analytic work and redefining the locus of change in clinical work. Objects relations span the range from intrapsychic, inter-relational and intersubjective experiences. Interactions with the other, mother-infant relationships, and engagement with the environment and larger external cultural world have a fundamental impact on structure of psychic life.

This course will focus not only on variations of contemporary object relations theories but our attention will highlight the conscious and unconscious happenings in the “in-between” of the patient and analyst.

Objects relations will be examined not only as a theory but a way of working. Concepts like countertransference, projective identification and the structure of the unconscious itself will be points of reference for our explorations. The readings will highlight some contemporary elaborations of seminal ideas of Freud, Ferenczi, Klein, Winnicott, and Bion.

The goals of this class are to develop a working understanding of how theories of Object Relations shape and influence how we listen to, understand and trace the unconscious communications of our patients.

We will focus on the contemporary evolutions in Object Relations to examine the relationship between the intrapsychic and the intersubjective influences that shape and describe two people living in a world of co-constructed meaning and shared unconscious phantasy.

Readings:

I Introduction and Overview- Origins of Contemporary Object Relations

Week 1. Mourning and Melancholia - The Birth of Object Relations Theory

Ogden, T.H. (2002). A New Reading of the Origins of Object-Relations Theory. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 83(4):767-782.

Supplemental Reading:

Freud, S. (1917a). Mourning and melancholia. *S.E.* 14.

II Emergence of Intersubjectivity

Week 2.

Brown, L.J. (2010). Klein, Bion, and Intersubjectivity: Becoming, Transforming, and Dreaming. *Psychoanal. Dial.*, 20(6):669-682.

Week 3.

Ogden, T.H. (2004). On holding and containing, being and dreaming. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 85(6): 1349-1364.

III Trauma, Environment and Therapeutic action

Week 4.

Winnicott, DW. (1964) “The Importance of the Setting in Meeting Regression in Psychoanalysis”. Chapter 19 in *Psychoanalytic Explorations* (Harvard 1989) pp. 96-102

Winnicott, D.W. (1975). Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis. The International Psycho-Analytical Library, 100:1-325. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis
Primary Maternal Preoccupation pp. 300-305

Week 5.

Ferenczi, S. The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi; Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA pp.51- 53

Gurevich, H. (2015). The Language of Absence and the Language of Tenderness: Therapeutic Transformation of Early Psychic Trauma and Dissociation

Supplemental Reading:

Levine H. (2014). Psychoanalysis and Trauma. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 34:214-224. Baranger, M.,

Week 6 and 7

Benjamin, J. (2004). Beyond Doer and Done to: An Intersubjective View of Thirdness. *Psychoanal Q.*, 73(1):5-46.

III The Analytic Field

Week 9

Civitaresse, G., Ferro, A. (2013). The Meaning and Use of Metaphor in Analytic Field Theory. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 33(3):190-209.

Ferro, A., Civitaresse, G. (2016). Confrontation in the Bionian Model of the Analytic Field. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 36(4):307-322.

Additional Readings

Civitaresse, G. (2010) The symbiotic bond and the setting in The Intimate Room; Rutledge, London- New York pp.22-49

Balint, M. (1968) Primary Love in The Basic Fault: Therapeutic Aspects of Regression; Chapter 12 pp. 64-76

Baranger, W. (2008). The Analytic Situation as a Dynamic Field. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 89(4):795-826.