

Comparison of Relationship Theory from Perspective of Freud and Klein in Ian McEwan's Works

Fatemeh Jalali *

Islamic Azad University, Jiroft, Iran

Abstract

An essential concept of Freud's and Kline's theory of the object relationship is the concept of instinctual drives as the basic human motivation such as object and Oedipus complex. Instincts are innate, and the earliest intra-psychic state of a child is the state of primary narcissism, where the ego is the object of libidinal instinct and there are no external objects in which the child invests psychic energy. Klein believed that both good and bad objects are introjected by the infant, the internalization of good object being essential to the development of healthy ego function. In Freud's theory, there is no preordained tie to people. The drives precede the object and even "create" the object by the experience of satisfaction and frustration, and the drives basically determine the quality of relationships. Object relations theorists such as Melanie Klein and Sigmund Freud will be reviewed in this research.

Keywords: Object relations theory, Melanie Klein, Sigmund Freud, Ian McEwan

INTRODUCTION

Object relations theorists study the early formation and differentiation of psychological structures (inner images of the self and the other, or object) and how these inner structures are manifested in inter- personal situations. These theorists focus on the relationships of early life that leave a lasting impression; that is, a residue or remnant within the psyche of the individual. These residues of past relationships, these inner object relations, shape perceptions of individuals and relationships with other individuals. Individuals interact not only with an actual other but also with an internal other, a psychic representation that might be a distorted version of some actual person.

Although object relations is an offspring of Freud's Drive theory, nevertheless, the emphasis of the concept about Drive of Object Relations is different from Freud's. The focus of the concept about Drive according to object relations is emphasized on the mother and child relationship. The emphasis of object relations on habitual patterns of early interpersonal relations is stressed significantly on the mother's roles (Apriyanti, 2017).

All psychoanalytic theorists and therapists are interested in the person's inner world; however, they may explain that inner world differently, emphasizing different aspects

because of their theoretical orientation. Let us look at one more illustration of different ways of understanding an individual's inner world. The story of Little Red Riding Hood presents Red Riding Hood's inner experience of her grandmother. While an observer might understand the grandmother's annoyance for some reason, perhaps because the girl came late, Red Riding Hood experiences an unexplainable transformation of the grandmother into a threatening animal, the wolf. In the adult world of reality, such transformations are impossible, but in a child's inner world of experience, such distortions are very likely in the face of strong emotions.

Different psychoanalytic models might try to explain the child's behavior from slightly different perspectives. The classical Freudian model would stress the presence of early, primitive passions. The object relations models might discuss Red Riding Hood's self-representation and object representations. Self-psychology would approach her in yet a different way, emphasizing the self and possibly narcissistic rage. All these models are called psychoanalytic, but the focus of object relations models and models of the self can vary. In general, these models or theories explore the world of relationships, both past and present, and how the early and past relationships influence present psychic and social functioning. These psychoanalytic theories give clinical insight into how a person's inner world can cause difficulties in living in the actual world of people and relationships.

Ian McEwan's works

Ian McEwan is one of the finest writers of his generation, and amongst the most controversial. He has achieved unbroken popular and critical success since, on graduating from Malcolm Bradbury's Creative Writing Program, he won the Somerset Maugham Award for his collection of short stories, *First Love, Last Rites* (1975). Shortlisted four times for Britain's most prestigious literary award, the Booker Prize for Fiction, he secured the honor with *Amsterdam* (1998), confirming his position with Graham Swift, Julian Barnes and Martin Amis, at the forefront of contemporary British writing. Although primarily a novelist and short story writer, McEwan has also written three television plays published as *The Imitation Game* (1981), a children's book, a libretto *Or Shall We Die?* (1983), a film script *The Ploughman's Lunch* (1985), and a successful film adaptation of Timothy Mo's novel *Sour Sweet* (1988). Across these many forms, his writing nonetheless retains a distinctive character, perhaps best summed up in Kiernan Ryan's phrase, 'the art of unease'.

McEwan's early pieces were notorious for their dark themes and perverse, even gothic, material. Controversy surrounding the extreme subject matter of the first four works, which are concerned with pedophilia, murder, incest and violence, was exacerbated by their troubling narrative framework, the way in which conventional moral perspectives are disrupted or overturned, the reader frequently drawn into prurient involvement with the characters. McEwan's perpetrator-narrators draw us into complicity with their crimes, whilst his victims seem strangely collusive in their own exploitation and destruction. Three tales in *First Love, Last Rites* recount episodes of child sexual abuse: an adolescent boy's rape of his younger sister; a man's molestation and murder of his neighbor's nine-year-old daughter; and a schoolboy's submission to his aunt's transvestite fantasies. In *Between the Sheets* (1978) offers further exploration of

sadomasochistic, vicious and exploitative sexual relations, extending the range (in 'Psychopolis') into a troubling examination of the moral contradictions within so-called 'consenting' relationships. McEwan's first novel, *The Cement Garden* (1978), is the story of siblings who bury their mother in the cellar rather than acknowledge her death, then slowly revert to a feral state, avoiding the outside world until, in a powerful conclusion, the authorities simultaneously discover the body, and the elder children locked in incestuous climax. McEwan evokes a disquieting sense of inevitability in the unfolding of these events, generating an odd suspension of standard moral and narrative expectations. In the final work of this period, the exquisite short novel *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981), McEwan also crafts an eerily convincing tale from bizarre materials. A haunting account of the murder of an English couple during their holiday in Venice, it is striking for its portrayal of the victims' dreamlike collusion with their charismatic assassin.

Although McEwan's subsequent writing has moved away from the more disquieting of these themes, he continues to explore the impact on ordinary people of unusual or extreme situations, as they face sudden and shocking violence, or slip into acute psychological states. At the same time, his writing has begun to address broader themes, examining how social and political issues determine our personal lives. In *The Child in Time* (1987), which centers on the abduction of the protagonist's daughter, a further subplot explores the psyche of a (fictitious) senior politician, and a repulsive Margaret Thatcher figure makes a memorable appearance. *The Innocent* (1990) and *Black Dogs* (1992), both set in Berlin, probe the impact of the Cold War, the former (set at the outset of the division of Europe), representing McEwan's unique approach to the spy thriller genre; the latter following the story of a man struggling to compile his memoirs as the Wall comes down. McEwan has also focused increasingly on issues of sexual politics, most prominently in the television plays published as *The Imitation Game*, which specifically addresses the position of women in contemporary society. This aspect of his work has generated some disapproval: Adam Mars-Jones, for instance, teasingly described McEwan as 'one of the few successful literary examples of the New Man'. In fact, such comments ignore the consistency of McEwan's writing. In these texts, his preoccupation with unexceptional protagonists wrenched from their conventional sense of reality or self is reiterated, even magnified, as the claustrophobic settings of the early pieces are extended into the familiar but dislocated contexts of modern life.

Despite its success, *Amsterdam* occupies a curious place in McEwan's oeuvre. Finely if rather predictably plotted, it functions almost as a pastiche of those common themes: two lifelong friends/rivals conspire to murder each other, each convinced that he is in fact fulfilling the other's real desire. The novel is readable, even entertaining, but lacks the moral menace and disconcerting mood of the previous tales. Its flavor is a sort of 'McEwan-Lite': the approval of the Booker jury seemed, in effect, to signal the domestication of the artist formerly known as 'Ian Mac Abre', the integration of a radical presence into the comfortable contemporary mainstream. *Atonement* (2001), however, is an altogether more challenging and ambitious work. Hugely acclaimed, this is writing on a new scale, recognizably McEwan in the well-wrought prose and fine articulation of character, the cool precision of moral nuance, the adept and surprising effects of plot, but

also a revelation in the new and powerful sense of history, of the pattern of individual lives and actions within the sweep of great events – in this case, the 1939-45 War. The narrative voice itself is an astonishing achievement: we read the words of an elderly novelist, in 1990, writing the perspective of her own younger self in first 1935, then 1940. Her story hinges on a crucial error of perception, which may have been an act of malice, with which she effectively destroys the harmony of her childhood home. The atonement to which the title refers becomes the goal of her life, and her text, as she struggles somehow to make amends for the irrevocable damage she has caused. The dark, closing ambiguities of the book call into question the very possibility of achieving such grace, and express a troubled awareness of the complexities of responsibility and agency – in writing as in life. Few British novelists have matched the seriousness and sustained force of *Atonement*: it is the work of a unique imaginative voice demanding our attention and respect (Matthews, 2002).

METHOD

In present study, research method is quantitative research. Quantitative research aim to measure the quantity or amount and compares it with past records and tries to project for future period. In social sciences, “quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships”. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories or hypothesis pertaining to phenomena.

CONCEPT OF OBJECT FROM PERSPECTIVE OF FREUD'S AND KLINE'S THEORY

Melanie Klein and Sigmund Freud have been two of the most significant theorists within psychoanalysis during the past 50 years. Traces of their influence are discernable in almost every area of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice. Yet, because of the politics and polemics surrounding "object relations theory" as a movement, there has been little critical and balanced appraisal of their contributions and a tendency to blur together their very different and highly distinct theoretical systems. The theories developed by Klein and Freud are complex, incomplete and often internally inconsistent. Since much of the discussion of their work tends either to glorify or dismiss it, the richness of their thought is often lost. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the explication of Klein's and Freud's concepts, and their differentiation from each other, through a detailed examination of their views concerning the origins and nature of "objects," a concept which occupies a central place within both systems.

Klein's impression was different from Freud's conception. First, Kline (1952) believed that the Oedipus complex began much earlier than Freud's age. At the genital stage (Klein preferred the term, because it mentions psychological psychology) reaches its peak at 3 or 4 years. Secondly, Klein believed that an important part of the Oedipus complex was the fear of children retaliated by their parents because of their imagination about emptying the parent's body. Third, he emphasized the importance of preserving the positive feelings of children toward their parents over the years of Oedipus. Fourth, he assumed that the oedipal complex, in its early stages, serves the same need in both sexes, that is, to form a positive attitude toward a good object and to avoid the bad object.

Klein further developed the notion of internal objects, and this was central in the expanded role of objects in her own and Fairbairn's work. In her early papers she had described more and more complex phantasies² in young children concerning their mothers' "insides." The latter were believed to contain all varieties of substances, organs, babies, etc. During the late 1920's, Klein began to write of parallel phantasies which the child develops concerning his own insides, a place similar to his mother's interior, also populated by body parts, substances, people, etc. In contrast to Freud's super-ego concept, Klein suggests that these phantasies of internal presences begin in the first months of life. As development proceeds, Klein suggests, representations of all experiences and relations with significant others also become internalized, in an effort to preserve and protect them. This complex set of internalized object relations is established, and phantasies and anxieties concerning the state of one's internal object world become the underlying basis, Klein was later to claim, for one's behavior, moods, and sense of self.

Klein conceives of the drives as more tightly bound to objects, both internal and external, than did Freud, and hence she rejected the notion of "primary narcissism." The infant, Klein argued, has a much deeper and more immediate relation to others than previous psychoanalytic theory has credited him with. (1932, p. 33) This rejection of the concept of "primary narcissism" was no mere theoretical refinement. Narcissism had been applied, within classical psychoanalysis, as an explanatory concept with regard to many clinical phenomena, ranging from tics (Ferenczi, 1921) to schizophrenia (Freud, 1914), and as a tool for understanding rigid resistances within the psychoanalytic situation itself (Abraham 1919). Klein and her collaborators took issue with these explanations. They argued that seemingly narcissistic manifestations like tics (Klein 1925), schizophrenia (Klein 1960) and extreme resistances in analysis (Reviere, 1936) are not objectless states (i.e., with only the ego as object), but reflect intense relations to internal objects. For Klein, the content and nature of relations with objects, both real people in the outside world and fantasized images of others imagined as internal presences, are the crucial determinant of most important psychical processes, both normal and pathological. She argued that Freud's "narcissistic libido" reflects not a cathexis of the ego itself, but of internal objects, and thus replaced Freud's distinction between narcissistic libido and object libido with the distinction between relations to internal vs. relations to external objects.

Klein bases her presupposition of inherent images and the knowledge of objects separate from and prior to experience on certain more speculative passages in Freud's own work, where he posits a phylogenetic inheritance containing specific memory traces and images. This line of thought, revealing Jung's influence, is developed most fully in *Totem and Taboo*, at the peak of Jung's impact on Freudian theory, and is a minor theme appearing now and again in Freud's later writing. Klein's use of this concept is much broader and more systematic. She argues the existence not just of specific phylogenetic memory traces and images, but of an inherent, broad set of images and phantasied activities such as: breasts, penises, the womb, babies, perfection, poison, explosions, conflagrations, etc. The earliest object relations of the child are relations with images of body parts, which operate, Klein suggests, as "universal mechanisms," (1932, p. 195 f.n.)

without the child necessarily having experienced the actual organs in reality. Only later do the child's images of objects take on aspects of the real objects they represent in the world. It is towards these a priori images that the child's drives are directed, both lovingly and hatefully, and they serve as a substratum and scaffolding onto which later experiences accrue. In her later writing, Klein further extended the principle of a priori knowledge and images of objects to whole objects as well. She wrote, "... the infant has an innate unconscious awareness of the existence of the mother ... this instinctual knowledge is the basis for the infant's primal relation to his mother." (Klein, 1957, p. 248)

CONCEPT OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX FROM PERSPECTIVE OF FREUD'S AND KLINE'S THEORY

Klein was not opposed to orthodox Freudian ideas about the Oedipus complex, but, as I have said, she believed that the superego was in operation very early, so it could not be the heir to the Oedipus complex of classical Freudian theory. She can be said to have left that in the background and to have foregrounded what she called 'the Oedipal situation', a broader concept. She dates the superego from the oral phase. 'Under the sway of phantasy life and of conflicting emotions, the child at every stage of libidinal organization introjects his objects -- primarily his parents -- and builds up the super-ego from these elements... All the factors which have a bearing on his object relations play a part from the beginning in the build-up of the super-ego.

'The first introjected object, the mother's breast, forms the basis of the super-ego... The earliest feelings of guilt in both sexes derive from the oral-sadistic desires to devour the mother, and primarily her breasts (Abraham). It is therefore in infancy that feelings of guilt arise. Guilt does not emerge when the Oedipus complex comes to an end, but is rather one of the factors which from the beginning mold its course and affect its outcome' (Klein, 1945, pp. 78-9).

DISCUSSION

According to S. Freud (Freud, 1984), sexual love provides human beings with experience of the highest and most complete form of satisfaction, and represents the original model of happiness. "We are never less protected from suffering than when we love, and never more helplessly unhappy than when we lose the loved object or its love". In order for adults to attain the satisfaction in romantic love, they need to experience their love object (the partner) as a separate and worthy, but not incestuous.

Integration of achievements of object relations and instinct development is a precondition for harmonic love relationship. On the other hand, sexual intercourse can be a source of conflict or used for fulfillment of some other emotional needs. For example, men with low self-esteem may have many sexual partners to achieve the feeling of self-worth, or women with the same problem can experience the sexual intercourse as source of humiliation. When the development of instincts did not lead to a satisfactory solution of Oedipus conflict, love object can be treated as incestuous object (the mother or the father). This can cause the difficulties in realization of pleasure in sexual intercourse, or sexual pleasure can be achieved only after humiliation of the object.

CONCLUSION

While Freud emphasized the first 4 to 6 years of life, Klein emphasized the first 4 to 6 months, emphasis is placed on the infant's drives (hunger, sex, etc.) and the child's relation to that object is fundamental.

Klein's ideas tend to shift the focus of psychoanalytic theory from organically based stages of development to the role of early fantasy in the formation of interpersonal relations.

Klein's final remarks on 'The Oedipus Complex in the Light of Early Anxieties' (1945) begin with a passage which supports my impression that she intermingles concepts which would be carefully distinguished in a Freudian developmental scheme. She says, 'The sexual development of the child is inextricably bound up with his object relations and with all the emotions which from the beginning mold his attitude to mother and father. Anxiety, guilt and depressive feelings are intrinsic elements of the child's emotional life and therefore permeate the child's early object relations, which consist of the relation to actual people as well as to their representatives in the inner world. From these introjected figures -- the child's identifications -- the super-ego develops and in turn influences the relation to both parents and the whole sexual development. Thus emotional and sexual development, object relations and super-ego development interact from the beginning' (p. 82)

She concludes, 'The infant's emotional life, the early defenses built up under the stress between love, hatred and guilt, and the vicissitudes of the child's identifications -- all these topics which may well occupy analytic research for a long time to come' (pp. 81-2). The paper I have been quoting was published a year before she coined a term to characterize the mechanism which she called 'a particular form of identification which establishes the prototype an aggressive object relation. I suggest for these processes the term "projective identification"' (Klein, 1946, p. 8), of which more anon. This lies at the heart of the paranoid-schizoid position, in which splitting, projective mechanisms and part-object relations predominate. Once again, this configuration is in a dynamic relation with the depressive position, in which whole-object relations, concern for the object and integration predominate. What has happened in the subsequent research to which Klein alluded is that these ways of thinking have been brought into relationship with one another. As David Bell puts it, 'The primitive Oedipal conflict described by Klein takes place in the paranoid-schizoid position when the infant's world is widely split and relations are mainly to part objects. This means that any object which threatens the exclusive possession of the idealized breast/mother is felt as a persecutor and has projected into it all the hostile feelings deriving from pre genital impulses' (Bell, 1992, p. 172)

If development proceeds satisfactorily, secure relations with good internal objects leads to integration, healing of splits and taking back projections. 'The mother is then, so to speak, free to be involved with a third object in a loving intercourse which, instead of being a threat, becomes the foundation of a secure relation to internal and external reality. The capacity to represent internally the loving intercourse between the parents

as whole objects results, through the ensuing identifications, in the capacity for full genital maturity. For Klein, the resolution of the Oedipus complex and the achievement of the depressive position refer to the same phenomena viewed from different perspectives' (ibid.). Ron Britton puts it very elegantly: 'the two situations are inextricably intertwined in such a way that one cannot be resolved without the other: we resolve the Oedipus complex by working through the depressive position and the depressive position by working through the Oedipus complex' (Britton, 1992, p. 35).

REFERENCES

- Britton, R. (1992). The Oedipus situation and the depressive position. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *New library of psychoanalysis, clinical lectures on Klein and Bion* (pp. 34-45).
- Freud, S. (1912). *Totem and Taboo*. Standard Edition.
- Freud, S. (1914). *On narcissism*. Standard Edition.
- Freud, S. (1924). *The economic problem of masochism*. Standard Edition.
- Guntrip, H. (1971). *Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy, and the Self*. New York: Basic Books.
- Heiman, P. (1952). Certain functions of introjection and projection in early infancy. In M. Klein, P. Heiman, S. Isaacs, J. Riviere, (eds.), *Developments in Psycho-Analysis*. London: Hogarth.
- Isaacs, S. (1952). The nature and function of phantasy In *Developments*. In M. Klein, P. Heiman, S. Isaacs, J. Riviere, (eds.), *Developments in Psycho-Analysis*. London: Hogarth.
- Klein, M. (1930). *The psychotherapy of the psychoses in Contributions to Psycho-analysis*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Klein, M. (1935). *A contribution to the psychogenesis of manic-depressive states in Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Klein, M. (1936) Love, guilt and reparation In M. Klein & J. Riviere, (eds), *Love, Hate and Reparation*. New York: Norton.
- Klein, M. (1940). *Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states in Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Klein, M. (1946). *Notes on some schizoid mechanisms in Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*. London: Hogarth.
- Klein, M. (1952). *The mutual influences in the development of ego and id In Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*. London: Hogarth.
- Klein, M. (1960). *A note on depression in the schizophrenic in Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*. London: Hogarth.
- O'Hara, & David K. (2011). Briony's Being-For: Metafictional Narrative Ethics in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. *Critique*, 52, 74-10.
- Robbins, M. (1980). Current controversy in object relations theory as outgrowth of a schism between Klein and Fairbairn Int. J. *Psychoanal*, 61,477-492.
- Apriyanti T. (2017). *Arrested preoedipal development in Briony's psychological complexity: a psychoanalytic analysis on Ian Mcewan's Atonement*.
- Winnicott, D. & Khan, M. (1953) Review In Int. J. *Psychoanal*, 34, 329-333.