

Reflections on EBOR 2018

By Daleen Macklin

I want to first thank the organizing committee for making it possible for me to attend and take part in the Twelfth International Evolving British Object Relations Conference. The focus of the conference was on the body as psychoanalytic object. This topic was refreshing, relevant, and interesting, especially after the mind has occupied the academic stage in recent years. The theme of the conference promoted reflections and much discussion. Thinking about the body as a psychoanalytic object made me more cognizant of the feelings in my body and in relationships as a mother, partner, and psychotherapist.

Initially, I found myself feeling a bit apprehensive as one could immediately sense the warmth of the greetings between colleagues and friends who seemed to know one another as people arrived at the Pan Pacific Hotel. I was suddenly aware of my South African accent, a giveaway of my different origins. Despite feeling very foreign, I was welcomed as a participant and colleague and felt free to participate and share ideas with others in a warm holding environment.

In the individual paper sessions, I appreciated the amount of time allocated for presentation and discussion. The facilitated discussion groups were also opportunities for further reflection on the plenary papers and thoughts emanating from the presentations. The papers presented were thought provoking. The relevant case material supported and elaborated on the ideas presented in the papers. Case material was handled in an empathic and respectful manner. I was acutely aware of the warmth of interpretations given to the client promoting reflection but also movement in the therapeutic process. Once again, interpretations were given to the client in a secure holding space created by the analyst.

I left the conference feeling stimulated and excited to discuss my experience at the conference with our own community in South Africa. Congratulations on a very successful conference.