Evolution of Psychoanalytic Concepts I: Introduction to Freud

D. Thurn / Fall 2019

Syllabus

It is not a good thing to work on a case scientifically while treatment is still proceeding – to piece together its structure, to try to foretell its further progress, and to get a picture from time to time of the current state of affairs, as scientific interest would demand. Cases which are devoted from the first to scientific purposes and are treated accordingly suffer in their outcome; while the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds, as it were, without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presuppositions.

Sigmund Freud, “Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis” (1912)

In psychology, we can only describe things by the help of analogies. There is nothing peculiar in this; it is the case elsewhere as well. But we have constantly to keep changing these analogies, for none of them lasts us long enough.

Sigmund Freud, The Question of Lay Analysis (1926)

They [Marx and Freud] cleared a space for the introduction of elements other than their own, which, nevertheless, remain within the field of discourse they initiated. In saying that Freud founded psychoanalysis, we do not simply mean that the concept of libido or the technique of dream analysis reappear in the writings of Karl Abraham or Melanie Klein, but that he made possible a certain number of differences with respect to his books, concepts, and hypotheses, which all arise out of psychoanalytic discourse.

Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” (1969)

. . . one who’d lived among enemies so long; if often he was wrong and, at times, absurd, to us he is no more a person now but a whole climate of opinion under whom we conduct our different lives . . .

W. H. Auden, “In Memory of Sigmund Freud (1939)

Course Description

This course will trace the movement of Freud's thinking as he struggles to address theoretical and clinical problems that arise within several broad areas of inquiry, including trauma, dreams, sexuality, object relations, and culture. We will explore Freud's contributions in three major phases of his career, each organized around a specific model of the mind, and consider their implications for psychoanalysis as a theory of the de-centered subject.

We will treat psychoanalysis as both a theoretical discourse and a reflexive clinical procedure which assumes a radical alterity at the heart of human subjectivity and relationship. As such, the course will provide an opportunity to examine what we might call "the vicissitudes of the other" in Freud's thought as it unfolds in the space marked out by the conflicting claims of mind and body, inside and outside, imagination and reality, determinism and chance, singularity and universality, and self and other.
Each of the three phases in Freud's thinking as it appears in our readings will feature a significant intellectual and clinical encounter: with cases of hysteria, which will lead Freud, under the influence of Charcot, to break with the assumptions of German materialist physiology, to propose a bold new notion of psychic causality, and to lay the groundwork for a radical theory of sexuality; with the mystery of dreams, which will produce not only an interpretive discipline for addressing the productions of the unconscious, but an entire theory of psychic structure and activity; and with melancholia, which will instigate the creation of a new theory of the divided mind, and the (re-)emergence of a theory of object relations based more fully on the claims of external reality.

**Supplementary Reading [Rec.]**

**General Reference**


**Introductions**


**Intellectual Contexts**


**Biography**


*Sexuality / Gender / Race*


Tim Dean and Christopher Lane, eds., *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis* (University of Chicago Press, 2001).


**Schedule**

9/10. **Class 1. Introduction: Reading Freud**


9/17. **Class 2. Beginnings: Clinical Encounters**


9/24. **Class 3. Seduction, Trauma, and Psychic Causation**


10/1. **Class 4. The Secret of Dreams**
Freud, S. (1900). *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Ch. 2, The Method of Interpreting Dreams: An Analysis of a Specimen Dream (S.E. 4: 96-121); Ch. 3, A Dream is the Fulfilment of a Wish (S.E. 4: 122-33); Ch. 5, The Material and Sources of Dreams (sel.). (S.E. 4: 163-64; 189-204; 216-19)

10/15. **Class 5. The Dream-Work and the Psychic Apparatus**


Ch. 7. S.E. 4: 509-621. [Rec.]

10/22. **Class 6. Infantile Sexuality and Drive Theory**


10/29. **Class 7. A Case Study in Infantile Sexuality: Little Hans**


11/5. **Class 8: The Oedipus Complex**


11/19. Class 10. The Institution of Psychoanalysis


No Class November 26 (Thanksgiving)

12/3. Class 11. Identification and the Splitting of the Ego


12/17. Class 13. The Structural Model of the Mind

*Winter Break*

1/7. **Class 14. The Uncanny**


1/14. **Class 15: Memory and Construction in Analysis**


