

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

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**Winter, 2015
Freud II**

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This seminar is intended to introduce you to selected aspects of Freud's later work on the theory of mental functioning, psychosexual development, anxiety and defense, relation to reality, and the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. From approximately 1914 to 1917 Freud had attempted to summarize and clarify his work up to then, both in the Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis and in a series of 'metapsychological' papers concerning fundamental issues in the psychoanalytic theory of drives, repression, consciousness and unconsciousness, and the several systems making up mental functioning. Although much seemed assured, it was plain to him that these efforts uncovered further problems. At the same time he sought to expand the reach of psychoanalytic understanding in new and puzzling arenas: (1) experiences of self-love and self-hatred, inner objects and identifications, and their implications for paranoia, severe depression, and normal development; (2) the clinical and theoretical importance of repetitive, self-destructive, self-punishing features of mental life. In the monographs and papers we will be reading, Freud finds himself obliged to modify his views of drives and self-regulation, as well as his conception of mental systems and the properties of being conscious and unconscious. Having done so he returns to the home territory of psychoanalysis—the psychopathology of hysterical and obsessional neurosis—and reformulates his views of anxiety, defense, and symptom formation. During these same years and into the 1930's, Freud returns again and again to the complexities of psychosexual development in boys and girls, to problems involving defense and the relation to reality, and finally to the elements of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis.

In a given week there may be more reading than is practical for you. We are aiming for quality of attention, not quantity. We will only be able, in any event, to touch on selected aspects of the material. Please bring up for discussion what you found interesting, puzzling, useful, or evocative personally and clinically.

We will be asking each of you to present a brief summary of one paper during the seminar (from among those marked with *****). The idea will be to highlight the central one or two ideas where the paper adds to or elaborates Freud's thinking. We will contact one of you to ask to summarize the paper for the first week and the others will be assigned in the first meeting.

Seminar dates: Nov. 12, 19; Dec. 3, 10, 17, 2015;
(Academic Lecture; Jan. 7 & APSaA Mtgs; Jan 14);
Jan. 21, 28 Feb. 4

Week 1 (Nov 12)

Main topic for discussion: ‘Mourning and melancholia’ and ‘On Transience’ The first shows Freud finding guilty conscience to be an independent actor in the genesis of severe or psychotic depression, in neurotic character, and in normal mental life. He develops further his account of ‘within-self’ relationships involving self-observation and self-criticism, based on internalization and identification, begun in the 1914 paper on narcissism. In doing so he also anticipates later changes in the theory of psychical systems. In the second, a literary paper, Freud points to how a potential failure of mourning disrupts the ongoing cycle, the back and forth experience, of the life-long fort/da game, later seen in Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe how Freud develops the key difference between clinical depression and non-pathological grief—i.e., the loss of “self-regarding feelings” and the presence of “self-revilings”—into a distinct psychological structure built up from object loss and identification.

Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. *SE* 14:243-258. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1916). On Transience. *SE* 14: 303-307. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 2 (Nov 19)

Main topic for discussion: In ‘Beyond the pleasure principle’ Freud struggles to account for human self-destructiveness and our repetitive pursuit of aims which involve pain, when he has held it to be axiomatic for many years that we are governed by the principle of aversion to pain – the pleasure principle – as modified only by the reality principle.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe the clinical observations which led to Freud’s re-evaluation of the theory of drives, as well as his speculative account of a psychobiological structure which receives and binds stimulation from within and without, the traumatic breaching of this structure, and the subsequent “compulsion to repeat”.

Freud, S. (1915) Thoughts for the Time On War and Death. *SE* 14: 273-300. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1920). Beyond the pleasure principle. *SE* 18:7-64. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 3 (Dec 3)

Main topic for discussion: ‘The ego and the id’. The emphasis will be on Freud’s presentation of the clinical grounds for distinguishing the facts or qualities of consciousness and unconsciousness from the nature of mental systems or structures, and on the implications he draws from re-thinking those systems.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe and compare the ‘topographical theory’ to the ‘structural theory’ and outline the reasons for Freud’s shift to a new model of the mind.

Freud, S. (1923). The ego and the id. *SE* 19:13-66. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 4 (Dec 10)

Main topic for discussion: ‘Inhibitions, symptoms, and anxiety’. Having reformulated the theory of drives and psychological systems, and ensconced the Oedipal complex at the center of psychosexual development, Freud revisits basic psychopathology. Almost, it seems, without really wanting to do so, he is gradually led to change his view on the nature of anxiety and its relation to defense. And in passing he gathers his thoughts together in this monograph regarding the distinctive features of hysterical and obsessional neurosis.

Learning objectives for this session: Participants will be able to describe the ‘danger situations’, as Freud calls them, which play a central role in development and symptom formation. Participants will be able to contrast the dynamics of hysterical and obsessional neurosis.

Freud, S. (1926). Inhibitions, symptoms, and anxiety. *SE* 20:87-156. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental Reading:

Freud, S. (1926) Inhibitions, symptoms, and anxiety. Addenda and Appendix. *SE* 20: 157-174. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 5 (Dec 17):

Main topic for discussion: We will read a series of four short papers from 1924 to 1938 on defense and the relation to reality in which Freud employs his revised theory of psychic structure to distinguish psychosis and neurosis in terms of repudiation and acceptance of reality, and discusses partial and splitting defenses, which both accept and reject reality.

Learning objectives for this session: Participants will be able to describe differences in symptom formation arising from different kinds of rejection of external reality.

Freud, S. (1924). Neurosis and psychosis. *SE* 19:149-156. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1924). The loss of reality in neurosis and psychosis. *SE* 19:183-187. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1927). Fetishism. *SE* 21:152-157. [PEP Web Link](#)

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Freud, S. (1938). Splitting of the ego in the process of defense. *SE* 23:275-278. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 6 (Jan 21):

Main topic for discussion: We will read a series of relatively short papers from 1920 to 1931 on psychosexual development, in which Freud returns again and again to the problem of understanding differences between male and female development, and is eventually led to expand his conception of the extent and nature of the Oedipus situation in order to accommodate the complexity of female development.

Learning objectives for this session: Participants will be able to trace the evolution of Freud's views on the onset, dynamics, and outcome of Oedipal conflicts in boys and girls.

Freud, S. (1923). The infantile genital organization: an interpolation into the Theory of sexuality. *SE* 19:141-145. [PEP Web Link](#) *****

Freud, S. (1925). Some psychical consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes. *SE* 19:248-258. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1931). Female sexuality. *SE* 21:225-243. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1920) The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality. *SE* 18: 145-172. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 7 (Jan 28)

Main topic for discussion: In 'The economic problem of masochism' Freud continues his effort (building on "Beyond the Pleasure Principle") to account for human self-destructiveness and our repetitive pursuit of aims that involve pain. We will also read two contemporaneous papers that further develop and clarify psychosexual development, the gratifications of the superego, and the resolution of the Oedipus.

Learning objective for this session: Participants will be able to describe the origin of the superego in terms of early (archaic) identifications and it's the close relation to unconscious drives that leads to harsh self-punishments and erotized pain.

Freud, S. (1919) A child is being beaten. *SE* 17:175-204. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1924). The economic problem of masochism. *SE* 19:159-170. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1924). The dissolution of the Oedipus complex. *SE* 19:173-179. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 8 (Feb 4)

Main topic for discussion: Two chapters from the New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis. The monographs we have read for the past several weeks were written as exploratory essays which begin with questions about one or another problem, then seek solutions with all the tentativeness, false starts and stops, and meandering which go with the essay form. These chapters written seven to thirteen years later, present Freud's thinking on the same topics with the benefit of further reflection. Now the form is expository and elegant, the ideas more integrated and developed.

Learning objectives for this session: Participants will be able to show how Freud correlates his division of the mind into three systems—'It', 'I', and 'Above-I'—with his revised view of anxiety, the danger situations of childhood, and symptom formation.

Freud, S.(1933). The dissection of the psychical personality. In New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis. *SE 22:57-80*. [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1933). Anxiety and instinctual life. In New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis. *SE 22:81-111*. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental Reading:

Freud, S. Analysis terminable and interminable. *SE 23:211-253*. [PEP Web Link](#)
