

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

141 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459
Telephone: 617.266.0953 | Fax: 857.255.3253 | www.bpsi.org

Ego Psychology BPSI, Spring 2014

Instructors: Nancy J Chodorow, PhD and Alexandra M Harrison, MD

Ego Psychology (*Year I seminar*)

Nancy Chodorow, PhD & Alexandra Harrison, MD

February 6, 13, 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27

Thirty years ago, psychoanalytic training at BPSI and other like institutes was framed entirely in the terms of ego psychology. Today, ego psychology has throughout the psychoanalytic world been put on the defensive, replaced by many relational, transference-countertransference, and interactional theories (self psychology, relational psychoanalysis, contemporary and classical Klein, the British independent tradition, field theory, and so forth). We have only a few short weeks in which to study this important approach to theory, technique, and the mind. This class begins from the premise that ego psychology, in its classical and contemporary forms, has much to recommend it, both to the beginning and to the experienced analyst. Indeed, it is impossible to conceptualize the mind from a psychoanalytic perspective or to think about doing analytic work without taking for granted many of the premises of this theory. Growing out of “middle” and “late” Freud, particularly works like “Two principles of mental functioning” (1911), “On narcissism” (1914), “Mourning and melancholia” (1917), *The ego and the id* (1924), and *Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety* (1926), but encompassing concepts that we meet in Freud’s first writings (for example, repression, resistance, defense, conflict, and, from the *Studies on Hysteria*, “a psychical group divorced from the ego”), ego psychology describes, and looks at how we address clinically, the basic neurotic and normal development and functioning of the psyche.

Our course introduces you to some of what came in the early 1940s to be called ego psychology, named especially after the writings of Anna Freud (1936, *The ego and the mechanisms of defense*) and Heinz Hartmann (1939, *Ego psychology and the problem of adaptation*). We will look at founding classical writers whose thinking remains germane to our work today, creative rethinkers like Loewald, and contemporary writings by those whose thinking is in the ego psychological tradition.

Following after your study of Freud, the course is organized around central ego psychological concepts and writers. Along the way, we will pay attention to how concepts developed historically. We begin with the writings of Anna Freud in relation to the ego defenses, followed by the contributions of early infant researchers Spitz and Mahler to our understanding of ego development. We then consider, through the writings of Hartmann and Brenner, conflict and compromise formation; Paul’s Gray’s contributions to the analysis of drive and defense; and contemporary ego psychologists’ Schafer and Schlesinger’s reconsiderations on resistance. We study the evolution of ego psychology into a contemporary intersubjective ego psychology initiated by Loewald, and we conclude with unpublished reflections by the course’s instructors.

1. February 6: The ego and the mechanisms of defense: Anna Freud and A. Kris

Freud, A. 1936. The Mechanisms of defense *and* Identification with the aggressor. Chs.4 and 9 in *The ego and the mechanisms of defense*. New York: International Universities Press. Pp.42-53 and 109-121. [Available in the [Library](#)]

Kris, A. 1984. The conflicts of ambivalence. *Psychoanal. St. Child* 39: 213-234. [PEP Web Link](#)

2. February 13: Developmental perspectives: Spitz and Mahler

Spitz, R.S. & Wolf, K.M. 1945. Hospitalism – an inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood. *Psychoanal. St. Child* 1:53-74. [PEP Web Link](#)

Mahler, M S. 1963. Thoughts about development and individuation. *Psychoanal. St. Child* 18:307-324. [PEP Web Link](#)

3. February 20: Conflict and compromise formation: Hartmann and Brenner

Hartmann, H. 1939. The conflict-free ego sphere *and* Some integrative functions of the ego. Chs.1 and 6 in *Ego psychology and the problem of adaptation*. New York: International Universities Press. Pp.3-21 and 74-79. [Available in the [Library](#)]

Brenner, C. 1982. Affects and psychic conflict *and* Compromise formation. Chs.4 and 7 in *The mind in conflict*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press. Pp.55-71 and 109-119. [Available in the [Library](#)]

4. February 27: Defense analysis and the drives: Gray and Levenson

Gray, P. 1992. Memory as resistance and the telling of a dream. *Jl. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.* 40: 307-326 (also ch.7 in *The ego and the analysis of defense*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. Pp.151-170). [PEP Web Link](#)

Levenson, L. 1998. Superego Defense Analysis in the Termination Phase. *Jl. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.* 46:847-866. [PEP Web Link](#)

5. March 6: Resistance revisited: Schafer and Schlesinger

Schafer, R. 1983. Appreciation in the analytic attitude, and Resisting and empathizing. Chs.4,5 in *The analytic attitude*. New York: Basic. Pp.58-81. [Available in the [Library](#)]

Schlesinger, H.J. 2003. Resistance. Ch.6 in *The texture of treatment: On the matter of psychoanalytic technique*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press. Pp.81-101. [Available in the [Library](#)]

6. March 13: Intersubjective ego psychology: Loewald

Loewald, H.W. 1970. Psychoanalytic theory and the psychoanalytic process. Ch.16 in *Papers on psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Pp.277-301. [Available in the [Library](#)]

Loewald, H.W. 1979. The waning of the Oedipus complex. Ch. 23 in *Papers on psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Pp.384-404. [PEP Web Link](#)

7. March 20: Intersubjective ego psychology: McLaughlin and Poland

McLaughlin, J.T. 1988. The analyst's insights. *Psychoanal. Q.* 57 370-389 (also Ch.6 in *The healer's bent*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press. Pp.87-100). [PEP Web Link](#)

Poland, W.S. 2000. The analyst's witnessing and otherness. *Jl. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.* 48: 17-34. [PEP Web Link](#)

8. March 27: New directions and developments

Chodorow, N.J. n.d. Toward an American independent tradition. Unpub. mss. [Available in the [Library](#)]

Harrison, A.M. n.d. The sandwich model: The "music and dance" of therapeutic action. In press. [Available in the [Library](#)]