Psychopathology I: Hysteria and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders

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Psychopathology I, with its focus on Freud’s early work on the neuroses, is a historically important course. Modern students of psychoanalysis, however, often struggle to find the clinical relevance of this early work which revolves around psychopathology and treatment.

One reason for this is that our view of “psychopathology” has changed dramatically. Freud’s modern sensibility has been enlarged by a postmodern one. To disturbances related to sexuality, aggression and repression have been added ones of subjectivity and meaning. This makes for a challenge in relevance when it comes to teaching Freud’s view of psychopathology.

At the same time, Freud’s early thinking matters (and over the next eight weeks we’d like to make this case). Psychoanalysis began with Freud’s investigations into the structure of Hysteria and Obsessive–Compulsive Neurosis, and with this the understanding that psychopathological conditions could be usefully understood in terms of trauma and memory through the relationship between the conscious and unconscious, and through an appreciation of internal conflicts over, and defenses against, unconscious aggression and sexuality. Our present-day theories represent generations of theoretical evolution from these seminal ideas. As Yarom (1997) writes: “The field of psychoanalysis originated a century ago from Freud's analysis of his hysterical patients.”

Wherever we locate ourselves on the theoretical spectrum, from Neo-Freudian to Post-Bionians, it is helpful to appreciate both the continuities and the transformations that have occurred over the past 120 years. This is true on a purely theoretical basis, and it is true when it comes to our clinical work. Moreover, it is true because theories cannot be well understood apart from the minds of the persons who have created them, and Freud is an important presence in every one of those theorists’ minds.

Specifically, we hope to:

- Examine these classical readings on the neuroses with an eye to the evolving central themes in Freud - the unconscious, drives, sexuality, the place of reality, the father, and the Oedipus.
• Take a look at how these themes have shaped, and emerged in, some admittedly selective tenets of today’s psychoanalysis. We hope that this overview will prove useful context and foundation for the next four years of classes.

In terms of the classical themes that have formed a basis for present day thought, we’ll explore:

• Trauma
• The mechanism of forgetting or not knowing as it has evolved from Freud’s conceptions of repression.
• The evolution of gender from a primarily biological experience to a socially constructed one.
• The evolution of the triangular structure of the Oedipus, and the reality principle, to conceptualizations of thirdness and metalization.

Please don’t be daunted by the readings. The suggested reading list is extensive, but worth delving into if you have time. We will try to cover the relevant material in class. Perhaps at some point in the future, when you are teaching, writing or just plain curious, you may want to dig up this syllabus.

Note that some suggested readings are listed as previous readings. This is meant as a reminder that you’ve encountered the reading before and may want to review them. Listing them reflects the hoped-for continuity of the overall training program.

Each week we also hope to have an informal clinical presentation, with the emphasis on informal. In the course of your week, simply keep your mind open for interactions that illustrate the week’s reading. If, as a group, you come up dry, we will have something to share.

We look forward to thinking with all of you the next eight weeks.

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Week 1 (September 19, 2019)

Hysteria: Freud’s appreciation of the role of trauma

In this first session we will review Freud’s early work on Hysteria, focusing on trauma theory. In these seminal works we can see Freud’s emerging view of a dynamic mind. While the characters that occupy this dynamic interplay change over the years, this paradigm proves lasting and foundational. This session builds on reading that you did in the Freud I course last year, particularly Freud’s early papers (1894 - 1896). These showed his discovery of the unconscious, intra-psychic conflict and defense and the role of these in psychopathology and symptom formation.
We will briefly discuss Freud’s paper The Aetiology of Hysteria - a suggested reading - in class. It is a clear argument for hysteria being caused by repressed sexual trauma, and it illustrates ideas of defense and repression, and of the importance of the unconscious. As Freud writes in this paper, “at the bottom of every case of hysteria there are one or more occurrences of premature sexual experience….”. His understanding of trauma is stunningly accurate. He writes that these experiences, in order to be traumatogenic, must suit two conditions. “They must possess the relevant suitability to serve as a determinant and (they must recognizably possess) the necessary traumatic force.”

For reading we chose Freud’s Emmy von N. over Anna O. and Dora because this case dovetails with the Bromberg paper in session 2. It’s long; read as much as you can.

The Roth paper is from Storms in her Head: Freud and the Construction of Hysteria. It’s a book that has a lot of relevance to this course.

In terms of the suggested reading, Brenner’s (1915) paper on repression, continues reading you did in last year’s Freud seminar (his 1915 paper “On repression”). The Brenner paper offers a sweeping overview of Freud’s development of this concept, and it offers a larger window into his evolving thinking.

Readings:


Roth, M. (2001). Falling into history: Freud’s case of Frau Emmy von N. In Dimen, M. and Harris, A. (Eds.), Storms in her head: Freud and the construction of hysteria (Ch. 7, pp. 167-184). NY: Other Press. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

Suggested readings:


Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session students will be able explain how Freud thought about the role of conflict and defense in the formation of symptoms.
**Week 2 (September 26, 2019)**

**Hysteria: Repression, dissociation and classical and contemporary approaches to not knowing**

At its core, psychoanalysis remains an endeavor organized around knowing what is not yet known, or knowing what was once known and is now no longer known. The nature of how this knowing takes place, and the nature of what is known and not known, has, however, changed a great deal over the course of psychoanalysis.

**Bromberg’s** paper, which is organized around a study of Freud’s Emmy von N case, begins our exploration of the way that early thinking about knowing and not knowing has both catalyzed and given way to more modern approaches. As Bromberg writes, “an important shift is taking place that is leading away from the unconscious, preconscious, conscious continuum per se, toward a view of the mind as a configuration of discontinuous, shifting states of consciousness with varying degrees of access to perception and cognition.” While Bromberg’s work lies squarely within the American relational school, this quote reflects wide swaths of modern psychoanalytic approaches to the psychoanalytic endeavor of knowing.

During this course we'll do our best to resist reductive, binary comparisons. Freud’s understanding of knowing and not knowing was often quite nuanced. Lucy R. tells Freud, “I didn’t know. Or rather, I didn’t want to know! Wanted to drive it out of my head and think of it again…. ” Here Freud describes a state of mind in which one both knows and doesn’t know a thing at the same time. Lucy R.’s words reflect the experience we now describe as “dissociation”, and of course that word, “dissociation” was very much central to the early work on hysteria.

In terms of the suggested reading, **Winnicott’s** “The theory of the parent-infant relationship” is only read in a Year V elective, “Soma as Canvas”. Yet this is the paper contains his famous “there is no such thing as a baby …” Winnicott’s idea forms the basis of much of the today’s approach to knowing found in such theorists as Ogden, Bion, Ferro, Hoffman and others, and so it reflects the very important move away from the classical notion of an unconscious that holds fully formed thoughts and affects, to the contemporary notion that knowing is not an archaeological process, but one of mutual construction.

The **Davies** paper is from Muriel Dimen & Adrienne Harris (eds.), *Storms in Her Head: Freud and the Construction of Hysteria*. Other Press. pp. 245-264 (2001). It’s a book we have borrowed from a bit, as it contains some interesting modern reflections on Freud’s early work.

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Readings:

**Bromberg, P.M.** (1996). Hysteria, dissociation, and cure: Emmy von N revisited. *Psychoanalytic Dialogue, 6*(1), 55-71. [Pep Web Link](#) (You read other Bromberg, but not this paper, which is directly relevant to Freud’s writing on hysteria).
Suggested readings:

Previous: **Freud, S.** (1905). Three essays on the theory of sexuality. *SE VII* (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works (pp. 130-243). (Focus for that reading was on the summary, pp. 231-243.) [Pep Web Link]

**Davies, J.M.** (2001). Back to the future in psychoanalysis: Trauma, dissociation, and the nature of unconscious processes. In Dimen, M. & Harris, A. (Eds.), *Storms in her head: Freud and the construction of hysteria* (Ch. 11, pp. 243-264). NY: Other Press. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]


Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to describe two ways patients might protect themselves from knowing something they can’t bear to know.

**Session 3 (October 3, 2019)**

**From trauma theory to a theory based on instincts and wishes**

By the time of Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality in 1905, **Freud** had largely given up the trauma theory of the neuroses (“largely,” because, despite popular criticism from **Masson** and others, Freud really never fully abandoned any of his ideas). Now, instead of (or perhaps along with) repressed memories of traumatic events forming the core of the neuroses, there is the belief that it is our relationship to forces within us - instincts and wishes - that form the basis for our suffering.

**Freud’s** Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality is a pretty simple and straightforward read. It is a good expression of his post trauma theory understanding of hysteria.

It is easy to ally with Bromberg’s critique of Freud’s rejection of Breuer’s concept of autohypnosis as leading us away from an appreciation of the importance of dissociation, but from another angle one could argue that today’s focus on psychoanalysis as a treatment for the ordinary human misery that Freud felt was man’s lot is a consequence of this shift. **Bergmann** captures this in his paper with the words; “The unconscious will be of interest not only to the neurotically ill, but to all those who wish to know themselves.”

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Readings:

Bergmann, M. (2001). The leap from the studies on hysteria to the interpretation of dreams. In Dimen, M. and Harris, A. (Eds.), Storms in her head: Freud and the construction of hysteria (Ch. 16, pp. 341-358). NY: Other Press. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

Suggested readings:
Previous: Freud, S. (1905). The differentiation between men and women. SE XII (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works (pp. 218-221). Pep Web Link

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to explain the significance of Freud’s shift from a theory based on repressed memory of trauma, to one based on the belief that it is our relationship to forces within us - instincts and wishes - that form the basis for our suffering.

Session 4 (October 10, 2019)

Hysteira: From the Oedipal to the Pre-Oedipal

We’ve selected the Zetzel paper because it serves a dual purpose.

It is an easy and legitimate target in terms of its treatment of gender. Perhaps it is a bit of a straw man in this regard. In session V we will contrast modern psychoanalytic approaches to gender with what can be found in Freud’s early work.

This week, however, we will use the Zetzel as a springboard for thinking about a crucial development in thinking about psychopathology: the idea that there is an important distinction between oedipal and preoedipal issues. This thinking served as a crucial underpinning of the work of Winnicott, Klein, and other object relations theorists, which in turn served as a foundation for subsequent work in field theory and intersubjectivity.

McDougall is a fascinating thinker. Her work on perversions is worth reading. You don’t read her elsewhere in the curriculum.

Readings:


Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to assess the distinction between oedipal and pre-oedipal psychopathology.
Session 5 (October 24, 2019)

Gender

Gender, obviously, is not a psychopathology. However, when one reads classical psychoanalytic texts on the neuroses, this proposition is not always clear. Last week’s Zetzel paper, with, among other things, its reference to “(b)ad little girls and curls,” embodies what has been objectionable in psychoanalysis’ treatment of women and gender.

The Horney paper is an early (1928) feminist critique of a male dominated theory. It prescient and brave, and it broaches the importance of subjective, as opposed to objective, knowledge. Horney is simply worth reading, and you don’t read her elsewhere in the curriculum.

In terms of modern feminist critiques of classical psychoanalytic views on gender and hysteria, there were lots of good choices.

Among the suggested readings, the Devereaux paper represents an interesting and thoughtful feminist critique of the feminist embrace of the concept of hysteria.

Goldner’s paper is an iconic study not only of gender, but also of the post-modern, constructivist influence that has transformed psychoanalysis. Here is a teaser: “(A)s a postmodern tide of uncertainty…. undermines the intellectual status and truth claims of virtually all academic disciplines, there has been an extraordinary resurgence of scholarly interest in psychoanalysis as the discipline most practiced in the art of uncertainty.”

Corbett is smart, and interesting, and worth the time.

Ultimately we assigned the Benjamin paper because it is both an excellent feminist critique and because it, like the Goldner, embodies important ideas that follow from the rejection of a binary approach to gender: constructed meaning, intersubjectivity, the problem of complementary relations, and more.

One final thought. As you read, and as you consider the legitimate critiques of psychoanalysis’ early attitudes towards hierarchy, authority and gender, consider also, again in the service of rejecting the binary, Andre Green’s observation that when Fred shifted from hypnosis and suggestion to psychotherapy and listening, he also ceded some of the physicians autocratic, hierarchical role, and he replaced these with the idea of allowing the patient to be his guide.

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Readings:

Pep Web Link
Benjamin, J. (2001). The primal leap of psychoanalysis, from body to speech: Freud, feminism and the vicissitudes of the transference. In Dimen, M. and Harris, A. (Eds.), *Storms in her head: Freud and the construction of hysteria* (Ch. 1, pp. 31-63). NY: Other Press. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

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Suggested readings:


Devereux, C. (2014). Hysteria, feminism, and gender revisited: The case of the second wave. *English Studies in Canada, 40*(1), 19-45. [Available online and in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to list two criticisms Horney and Benjamin had of Freud's theory.

**Session 6 (October 31, 2019)**

**Obsessional neurosis.**

We shift our focus from hysteria to obsessive compulsive neurosis, and to an emphasis on the Oedipus. **George Makari** writes: "In 1909, Freud published two case histories that rely on Oedipal explanations. ...Little Hans developed fears of genital mutilation as a result of his jealous love for his mother…. The Rat Man suffered from oscillations of love and hate for the father." In the 1909 Clark University lectures Freud stated that the Oedipus was a core complex in psychosexual development.

You don’t read Freud’s Rat Man elsewhere, or about obsessive compulsive neurosis, other than in year V, Freud III, “The Future of an Illusion. That paper sees religion as being in conflict with the primacy of science. But in terms of psychoanalytic origins in treating and understanding psychopathology, the Rat Man is important.

Again, one is still struck by Freud’s focus on the dynamic interplay between the unconscious, the conscious, and the forces and mechanisms that determine knowing and not knowing. Childhood sexuality and seduction are central again. In the Rat Man, also, the role of aggression and defenses against its full expression are emphasized more than in hysteria. (Going back to trauma theory, Freud felt that in instances of actual sexual trauma, the hysterical had been the passive recipient of abuse while the obsessional had been the child seducer.)

It’s worth touching on Freud’s “Notes upon a case of obsessional neurosis.” Freud generally destroyed all notes and records once his papers were complete, but the notes on the Rat Man case are among the only survivors of original record. They are an interesting window.
The Blass paper is a nice overview of Freud’s thinking on the Oedipus, and its larger importance. It verges on a cliff note, which if one swallows one’s pride, is not such a bad thing.

Readings:
We will watch a film of the Rat Man case during class.

Fisch, M. (1999, unpublished). Rat man, The case. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].


Suggested reading:

Mahony, P. (1986). Freud’s theory of obsessional neurosis. In Freud and the rat man (Chapter 6, pp. 151-173). New Haven: Yale University Press. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to describe the relationship between aggression and obsessional neurosis that Freud illustrates in the Rat Man Case.

Session 7 (November 7, 2019)

The neuroses and the progression from the Oedipus and the reality principle to thirdness and mentalization

Tracking the movement from classical to more recent thinking, we'll spend our last two sessions on two cornerstones of contemporary psychoanalysis that can be seen to derive from Freud's work around the Oedipus: conceptualizations of thirdness and the way development is catalyzed by the “good enough” frustration of drives, needs and wishes. Work on this idea is found in Lacan, Green, Benjamin, Ogden, Coelho Jr. and many others. In terms of psychopathology, today's focus on subjectivity, mentalization, early developmental disorders and more owe much to various conceptualizations of the “third”.

One of our primary aims with this class is to anchor your future readings in recent thought with Freud’s contributions, and his work on the Oedipus, triangulation, the father and the reality principle is core to this anchoring. In the words of Blass, “the presence of the (Oedipal) third becomes the source of all ambivalence and conflict...”
In terms of the “required reading, Freud’s “Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” is classic and succinct. You will also read it in Freud II, along with the much longer “The Ego and the Id”. It’s easy to read twice, worth the time, but if you’d prefer to wait, here, in Freud’s words, is the core idea from this paper.

“To an ever-increasing extent the Oedipus complex reveals its importance as the central phenomenon of the sexual period of early childhood. After that, its dissolution takes place; it succumbs to repression, as we say, and is followed by the latency period. It has not yet become clear, however, what it is that brings about its destruction. Analyses seem to show that it is the experience of painful disappointments. Even when no special events occur …. the absence of the satisfaction hoped for, the continued denial of the desired baby, must in the end lead the small lover to turn away from his hopeless longing.”

Coelho Jr.’s paper is an excellent and up to date overview of various approaches to thirdness, and you don’t read it or him elsewhere in the curriculum. As you read, think about Freud’s early work on the Oedipus as a background for this cornerstone of current thinking.

In terms of the suggested reading, the Benjamin paper in particular is an interesting feminist critique of Freud and other’s view of the centrality of the father at the expense of the mother.

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Readings:


**Coelho, N.** (2015). ‘Origins and destinies of the idea of thirdness in contemporary psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97(4), 1105-1127. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

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Suggested readings:


**Freud, S.** (1923). The ego and the id. *SE, XIX (1923-1925): The ego and the id and other works* (pp. 1-66). [Pep Web Link]


The entire Volume 73, Issue 1 of Psychoanalytic Quarterly deals with the subject of the third.

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to explain the relationship between Freud’s concept of the Oedipus and the current concept of “thirdness.”

Session 8 (November 14, 2019)

The neuroses and the progression from the Oedipus and the reality principle to thirdness and mentalization

Our final class continues our exploration of the Freudian origins of core, modern ideas around thirdness, and, with the Green reading, the way that many if not all developmental capacities, including the important capacity to think about one’s own, and the other’s, mind (a foundational capacity when it comes to intersubjectivity), is catalyzed by the absence of wish fulfillment. Current thinking in this area (think Winnicott’s “good enough mother”) is both an outgrowth of the Oedipus, and also Freud’s work on the reality principle.

In terms of more recent conceptualizations and their relationship to Freud’s early work, there were multiple reading options. We considered using one of Fonagy’s “Playing with reality papers here. You only read Fonagy in Psychopathology II, year 4, and in an elective; “Soma as Canvas”. His papers on mentalization are important, and they combine an interesting empirical, developmental angle that is refreshing.

We also considered Winnicott.

We decided, however, on Andre Green. It’s a long and complex paper, but worth the effort. Green may be one of the more underrepresented theorists in the BPSI curriculum. At present he is only read in one course, and that is an elective. He is, however, a deep and influential thinker. His paper, perhaps as well as any, illuminates the arc from Freud to much of what you will be reading over the next four years and beyond.
Readings:


Suggested readings:


**Freud, S.** (1920). Beyond the pleasure principle. *SE XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the pleasure principle, group psychology and other works* (pp. 1-64). [Pep Web Link](#)


Reminder reading: **Freud, S.** (1911). Formulations on the two principles of mental functioning. In *SE XII (1911-1913): The case of Schreber, papers on technique and other works* (pp. 213-226). [Pep Web Link](#)

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this class candidates will be able to explain how the absence of wish fulfillment catalyzes development, including the development of mentalization.

**Other suggested readings**

Throughout this course we will reference changing conceptualizations of the unconscious. The concept of the unconscious is of course central to Freud, and tracing evolving ways of thinking about the unconscious is a pretty good way to trace changes in psychoanalytic thinking. Current theory has a radically different view of the nature of the unconscious than classical theory.

Consider, as one of many possible examples, Bion’s notion that “conscious experience remains an ‘undigested fact’ until it is processed by dream-work and turned into a memory that may be linked with other memories in an individual's self-narrative”.

We'll keep this in mind during class lectures and discussions, but if you are interested in some additional reading here are a few suggestions:


Busch, F.N. (2017). A model for integrating actual neurotic or unrepresented states and symbolized aspects of intrapsychic conflict. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 86(1), 75-108. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Also recall a couple of papers you read in your Year I Basic Concepts course:

Civitarese and Ferro’s (2013). The meaning and use of metaphor in analytic field theory. Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 33(3), 190-209. [Pep Web Link]