



Seminar Year III
Fall, 2021
Ego Psychology

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Seminar Dates: September 23; October 7, 14, 15, 28; November 4, 11, 18.

Academic Lecture: September 9.

Special Topics: October 21.

This seminar is intended to offer an overview of the origins, development, and current state of psychoanalytic ego psychology. We begin with the problems of a clinical and conceptual nature which led to Freud's 1923-1926 reformulations of his theories of psychical systems and anxiety. Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* applied those formulations in a thoroughgoing way to clinical practice. From the 1940s to the 1960s a vast body of work attempted to clarify, expand, and synthesize the theoretical implications of these changes, and to extend them through clinical observation, applied analysis, and child developmental research—even seeking to make psychoanalytic psychology a foundation for 'general psychology.' By the 1970s it was apparent to many of ego psychology's most prominent contributors that the effort had been, at the very least, over-ambitious. Many left this era of grand metapsychological ambition and synthesis behind, and with it even the language of ego psychology. For others, returning to a more experience-near, clinically-oriented orientation in psychoanalytic ego psychology has led in new and interesting directions. It is these newer trends we will be exploring in the last half of the seminar.

Week 1

Arlow, J. A., & Brenner, C. (1964). The topographic theory (pp. 9-23). Freud's criticisms of the topographic theory (pp. 24-30). The structural theory (pp. 31-42). In *Psychoanalytic concepts and the structural theory*. International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Supplemental:

Wallerstein, R. S. (2002). The growth and transformation of American ego psychology. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50(1), 135-168. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Students will be able to explain two clinical observations which led to Freud's decision to reject the qualities of being conscious versus being unconscious, as reliable and useful criteria for defining psychical systems in psychoanalysis.

Week 2

Freud, A. ([1936] 1966). The ego as the seat of observation. In *The ego and the mechanisms of defense* (revised edition, pp. 3-10). International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Freud, A. ([1936] 1966). The ego's defensive operations considered as an object of analysis. In *The ego and the mechanisms of defense* (revised edition, pp. 28-41). International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Freud, A. ([1936] 1966). Orientation of the processes of defense according to the source of anxiety and danger. In *The ego and the mechanisms of defense* (revised edition, pp. 54-65). International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Supplemental:

Sandler, J. (1985). The application of analytic technique to the study of the psychic institutions. In J. Sandler with A. Freud, *The analysis of defense: The ego and the mechanisms of defense revisited* (pp. 25-66). International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning objective:

Students will be able to identify and discuss the three sources of danger and anxiety which Anna Freud posits as eliciting defense.

Week 3

Hartmann, H., Kris, E., & Loewenstein, R. M. (1946). Comments on the formation of psychic structure. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 2, 11-38. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental:

Apfelbaum, B. (1966). On ego psychology: A critique of the structural approach to psychoanalytic theory. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 47, 451-475. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Hartmann et al. characterize the “systems or structures” id, ego, and superego as “centers of psychic functioning”—that is, as groups of functions which “commonly appear together in states of psychic conflict.” Students will be able to give concise definitions of the functions attributed to each of the three systems.

Week 4

Arlow, J. A. (1963). Conflict, regression, and symptom formation. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 44, 12-22. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental:

Abend, S. M. (1990). Unconscious fantasies, structural theory, and compromise formation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 38, 61-73. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Students will be able to explain Jacob Arlow’s addition to the early theory of the precipitants of symptom formation, employing the construct of unconscious fantasy.

Week 5

Brenner, C. (2002). Conflict, compromise formation, and structural theory. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 71(3), 397-417. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental:

Renik, O. (1990). Comments on the clinical analysis of anxiety and depressive affect. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 59, 226-248. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Students will be able to describe Brenner’s four evaluative criteria for characterizing compromise formations on a continuum from pathological to normal.

Week 6

Gray, P. (1993). Paul Gray, M.D.: A brief didactic guide to analysis of the ego in conflict. *Journal of Clinical Psychoanalysis*, 2(3), 325-340. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental:

Landau, B. J. (1996). Consciousness as a beacon light. In M. Goldberger (Ed.), *Danger and defense: The technique of close process attention* (pp. 263-290). Jason Aronson. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Learning objective:

Students will be able to explain Paul Gray's concept of 'transference of authority' (or re-externalization of superego) as a defensive operation in the context of the psychoanalytic situation.

Week 7

Busch, F. (2014). Free association. In *Creating a psychoanalytic mind: A psychoanalytic method and theory*. Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Busch, F. (2014). Why do we ask questions?: (Part b of 'Free association'). In *Creating a psychoanalytic mind: A psychoanalytic method and theory* (pp. 78-87). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Supplemental:

Busch, F. (1993). "In the neighborhood": Aspects of a good interpretation and a "developmental lag" in ego psychology. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 41, 151-177. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Students will be able to describe the three elements Fred Busch suggests are found in free association.

Week 8

Paniagua, C. (2011). Psychotherapy and close-process technique. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 92(1), 43-56. [PEP Web Link](#)

Supplemental:

Erreich, A. (2015). Unconscious fantasy as a special class of mental representation: A contribution to a model of mind. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 63(2), 247-270. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective:

Students will be able to describe the four features of interventions which Paniagua defines as comprising the technique of 'close process attention.'

Suggested background reading:

How to do things with ego psychology: analyzing the process of generating and giving a Rorschach response.

Schafer, R. (1954). The response process. In *Psychoanalytic interpretation in Rorschach testing: Theory and application* (pp. 74-113). Grune & Stratton. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Freud's reformulation of anxiety and defense translated into 'action language', or plain English.
Schafer, R. (1983). Danger situations. In *The analytic attitude* (pp. 96-112). Basic Books.
[Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

What does Arlow consider to be an interpretation?

Arlow, J. A. (1987). The dynamics of interpretation. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 56, 68-87. [PEP Web Link](#)

How to analyze like Paul Gray, step-by-step.

Davison, W. T., Pray, M., & Bristol, C. (1990). Mutative interpretation and close process monitoring in a study of psychoanalytic process. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 59, 599-628. [PEP Web Link](#)

What is an unconscious fantasy? Part 1

Arlow, J. A. (1969). Unconscious fantasy and disturbances of conscious experience. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 38, 1-27. [PEP Web Link](#)

What is an unconscious fantasy? Part 2

Erreich, A. (2003). A modest proposal: (Re)defining unconscious fantasy. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 72(3), 541-574. [PEP Web Link](#)