

Autumn Term 2024

Laura Chernaik

10, 17, 24, 31 October & 7 November

Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis

The seminar series is organised in 'afterwardsness' (nachträglichkeit, après coup), that is, we will look back at earlier readings in the light of later readings and the impact of later interpretations. We start with Sartre, who, despite focusing on consciousness and being dubious, to say the least, about the idea of the unconscious, has a great deal to say about a preoccupation that's central for many hysterics: the meaning of being. Sartre's arguments about existential choice and Levinas's arguments for ethics as first philosophy come out of a twentieth century context: the Shoah and the genocides that, it can be argued, had undermined/underpinned modernity and humanism since the beginnings of humanism in the seventeenth century. We go on, in week 2, to look at Emmanuel Levinas's work, focusing, first of all, on his notion of the Face; a way of thinking of relationality as something other than 'empathy', grounded in his arguments for ethics as first philosophy. We also will look at Levinas' engagement with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty's thought and his discussion of Freudian psychoanalytical concepts like the Ego. In week 3, our discussion of phenomenology in relation to psychoanalysis moves on to a number of influential ways in which phenomenological thinking moves us beyond phallogocentrism: from Kristeva's writing about abjection, to Cixous's influential *écriture féminine*, and, to remind us of the Freudian context, a short text by Freud on the ego, castration, and perhaps, we might argue, abjection: "The splitting of the Ego in the process of defence". In week 4, we look at phenomenological philosophy and the body, focusing on a chapter from Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*, Chapter 4, "The intertwining—the Chiasm" and Irigaray's interpretation of this in her *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, "The invisible of the flesh". It can be argued that Sartre and to some extent Levinas are binaristic thinkers, and many critiques of this, influenced by Lacan or Derrida and also by Adorno, argue for writing or 'poetics' as outside of phallogocentrism. But, there are also many arguments based on polyglossic ways of thinking: creoleness or *mestizaje*. So, we conclude by looking at Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*. He argues, "We propose neither humanity's Being nor its models. We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well—the mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations. Creolizations bring into Relation but not to universalize; the principles of creoleness regress towards negritudes, ideas of Frenchness, of Latinness, all generalising concepts—more or less innocently". If you've read the writers Glissant discusses, from Césaire to Faulkner, or if you've read his poems, or if you have clinical examples of the mutual mutations and regressions he shows us, please bring them into the discussion.

Syllabus and readings:

Week 1: Hysteria and the meaning of being:

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (I recommend the following extracts):

Introduction, The Pursuit of Being
Section VI, Being-In-Itself
Part One, The Problem of Nothingness
Chapter One, Section V, The Origin of Nothingness
Chapter Two, Bad Faith
Part Three, Being-For-Others
Chapter One, The Existence of Others, Section 4, The Look
Chapter Two, The Body, Section I, The Body as Being-for-Itself: facticity
Part Four, Having, Doing, and Being
Chapter One, Being and Doing: Section III, Freedom and Responsibility

If you don't have time to read the full range of extracts, you could focus either on Bad Faith and Freedom and Responsibility or on The Look and The Body.

Week 2: The phenomenological critique of Sartre: Otherness

Emmanuel Levinas: extracts from *Totality and Infinity*, *Otherwise Than Being*, and a range of interviews with him:

Totality and Infinity (I recommend the following extracts):

Section III, Exteriority and the Face
Chapter B, Ethics and the Face
Chapter C, The Ethical Relation and Time

Otherwise than Being (I recommend the following extracts):

The Argument, Chapter I, Essence and Disinterest, pp 1-19 (especially 9. Subjectivity is not a Modality of Essence)
The Exposition, Chapter II.4. Saying and Subjectivity pp 45-57
Chapter V. Subjectivity and Infinity pp 131-171 especially The Responsible Subject that is not Absorbed in Being (pp 135-136) and Witness and Language (pp 145-149)

And these shorter pieces:

On intersubjectivity: notes on Merleau-Ponty, in *Outside The Subject* (1994, Stanford UP)
Bad Conscience and the Inexorable, in *Face to Face with Levinas* (1986, Suny UP)
The Face & Responsibility for the Other, both in *Ethics and Infinity* (1985, Duquesne UP)
The Ego and the Totality, in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, (1987, Martinus Nijhof Publishers)

If you want to explore the arguments about humanism further, please see Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, and see Adorno: "The critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that corrodes also the knowledge which expresses why it has become impossible to write poetry today." *Prisms*, 1955, MIT Press. Reprinted London, 1967.

If you don't have time to do all the reading, you could focus on the interview about the Face in *Ethics and Infinity*, the paper on The Ego and the Totality in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, and The Responsible Subject that is not Absorbed in Being (pp 135-136) and Witness and Language (pp 145-149) from *Otherwise than Being*.

Week 3 Phenomenology and the writing of the other: from abjection to *écriture féminine*:

Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror, I: Approaching Abjection (*online*: thing.net)

Helene Cixous, The Laugh of the Medusa, cixous_the_laugh_of_the_medusa.pdf
(wordpress.com)

Sigmund Freud, The splitting of the Ego in the process of defence.

Week 4 The body—Irigaray and Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*

Chapter 4, The intertwining—the Chiasm

Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*

Part 4, Love of the Other, The invisible of the flesh, a reading of Merleau-Ponty's "The Intertwining"

Both Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray have written expressively and poetically about the body. We contrast this 'poetic' style with Sartre and Levinas's more conventional philosophical language.

If you can, please read some more of Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*: Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are less 'poetic'.

Week 5 The plantation, creolisation, and poetics: Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*:

Glissant argues that creolisation gives us a way of thinking that's radically different to a Sartrean focus on Being. Self and Other relate in what he calls "mutual mutations". If you don't have time to read the entire book, please read the last part, Poetics (pp 185-224).

If you've read the writers Glissant discusses (from Césaire to Faulkner), or if you've read Glissant's poems, or if you have clinical examples of the mutual mutations and regressions he shows us, please bring them into the discussion.

Training Weekend Dates Unconfirmed

Andie Newman

Transference

Details TBC

Mark Maclean
21, 28 November & 5, 12 December

Navigating Intersubjectivity in the Therapeutic Encounter

This series of seminars will explore the theory and functions of intersubjectivity in psychoanalytic practice. We'll engage critically with the relational turn in psychoanalysis, and will consider the ways that analysts attend to the interplay of their patients' unconscious communications and their own. We will discuss different framings of the countertransference and the analyst's subjectivity, and how this may be both a barrier and a vital compass in the therapeutic process. What are the risks and benefits of making expressive use of the countertransference and of disrupting the classical stance of neutrality?

We will look at two conceptualisations of the Third in psychoanalytic theory, reading the work of Thomas Ogden and Jessica Benjamin and their theories of mutuality. Finally, we will explore contrasting positions on the place of the body and non-verbal experience in therapeutic technique, opening the question of how somatic approaches can be integrated within psychoanalytic work.

Seminar 1: Engaging Countertransference

Required reading

Bollas, C. (1983) 'Expressive Uses of the Countertransference', in *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 19:1

Mills, J. (2004) 'Countertransference Revisited', in *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 9:4

Suggested reading

Bernstein, J.W. (1999) 'Countertransference: Our New Royal Road to the Unconscious?', in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 9:3

Seminar 2: The Analytic Third and Receptive Mutuality

Required reading

Ogden, T.H. (2004) 'The Analytic Third: Implications for Psychoanalytic Theory and Technique', in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 73:1

Grossmark, R. (2012) 'The Unobtrusive Relational Analyst', in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 22:6

Suggested reading

Bollas, C. (2018) 'The Transformational Object' in *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, Routledge

Seminar 3: Thirdness and Recognition

Required reading

Benjamin, J. (2017) 'Beyond Doer and Done To: An Intersubjective View of Thirdness', in *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*, Routledge

Aron, L. (2006) 'Analytic Impasse and the Third: Clinical Implications of Intersubjectivity Theory', in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 87:3

Suggested reading

Benjamin, J. (2016) ' "Moving Beyond Violence": What We Learn from Two Former Combatants about the Transition from Aggression to Recognition', in Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (Ed.) *Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition: A Global Dialogue on Historical Trauma and Memory*, Barbara Budrich Publishers

Seminar 4: Working with the Body

Required reading

van der Kolk, B.A. (2002) 'Beyond the Talking Cure: Somatic Experience and Subcortical Imprints in the Treatment of Trauma', in Shapiro, F. (Ed.), *EMDR as an Integrative Psychotherapy*, American Psychological Association

Lombardi, R. (2011) 'The Body, Feelings, and the Unheard Music of the Senses', in *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 47:1

Suggested reading

Levit, D. (2018) 'Somatic Experiencing: In the Realms of Trauma and Dissociation—What We Can Do, When What We Do, Is Really Not Good Enough', in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 28:5

Lombardi, R. (2018) 'Beyond the Psychosexual: The Body–Mind Relationship—Discussion of "Somatic Experiencing"', in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 28:5

Spring Term 2025

Eli Jesner

9, 16, 23, 30 January & 6 February

Ethics and Psychotherapy: An Exploration

The aim of these seminars is to explore the complex interplay between ethics and psychotherapy. This will involve a philosophical exploration of what ethics might be, and reflection on the work that ethics might be doing in the practice of psychotherapy. At the very least I hope to help us see that there are deep questions in this field, and that it is worth our while, both as therapists and as human beings, to think carefully about them.

A rough outline of our seminars is as follows, with the qualification that it is not always easy to keep matters neatly separate and demarcated in these areas:

Week 1 - What is Ethics? What are its origins? What is the history of ethical thinking?

Week 2 - Ethics in Therapy - What are the issues here, for therapists, clients and for broader questions of theory? Looking at the centrality of guilt and shame in clinical work.

Week 3 - Virtue Ethics and Psychotherapy - Exploring one philosophical orientation towards working with ethics, with a focus on exploring human nature and character development.

Week 4 - Introducing Kantian Ethics - a different philosophical approach to ethics, with a focus on reason, rationality, autonomy and freedom.

Week 5 - Kantian Ethics and Psychotherapy - reflecting on the potential application of this model to our therapeutic work.

The recommended reading for the seminars is as follows:

Week 1:

Peter Singer - The Expanding Circle - It would be helpful to read the whole book but for these seminars I particularly recommend Chapters 1 and 2 Worth buying or available as a pdf here: [The Expanding Circle: Ethics, Evolution, and Moral Progress \(stafforini.com\)](http://www.stafforini.com)

Week 2:

It would be good to start to think about how often you encounter questions of guilt and/or shame in your work with clients.

For a psychoanalytic account of guilt and how much of a factor it is in many presentations of anxiety, it would be good to read "On The Theory of Anxiety and Guilt" by Melanie Klein, which can be found in her book Envy and Gratitude, Chapter 2.

Week 3:

For an introduction to the relationship between therapy and virtue ethics, please read my paper "Virtue Ethics and Psychotherapy".

If you are interested in more background reading on virtue ethics, then you could look at the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Virtue Ethics, GEM Anscombe's paper "Modern Moral Philosophy" (available online), Alasdair MacIntyre's "After Virtue" especially chapters 1-3 and 9-12 or Rosalind Hursthouse's "On Virtue Ethics".

If you want to go properly back to the sources, Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics is the key historical text, though modern theorists tend to be more interested in his approach and perspective than in the details of his specific ethical teachings.

Weeks 4 and 5:

For an introduction and background to Kantian Ethics and its application to therapy, please read my paper "Kantian Ethics and Psychotherapy". I am currently editing a draft of this and will send it along in the next few weeks (i.e. by the end of September).

Again, for further background you could look at the entry on "Kant's Moral Philosophy" on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. And if you are feeling brave and ambitious you could read Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. It is challenging, but not too long. Various editions are available, the one I refer to is the Cambridge Edition of the works of Kant, in the Practical Philosophy volume.

For a modern reading of Kant, you could look at Christine Korsgaard's "The Sources of Normativity" available here [korsgaard94.pdf \(utah.edu\)](http://www.utah.edu/~korsgaard94.pdf).

It may also be helpful, for thinking about reason and rationality, to read Chapter 4, titled "Reason", of Peter Singer's book "The Expanding Circle", mentioned above.

Katia Houghton

13, 20, 27 February & 6, 13 March

Klein in the Contemporary Clinic

Melanie Klein differentiates between the black-and-white splitting of the paranoid-schizoid state and the more integrated ambivalence of the depressive position, but in a post-object-relations training, it can sometimes be difficult to discuss Kleinian theory without inadvertently slipping into paranoid-schizoid certainty and reduction. Over five weeks, we will explore the development and complexity of some key Kleinian ideas, their influence on

and differences from later theorists and, thinking primarily from a clinical perspective, taking the 'total situation', transference and counter-transference into account, consider how they may influence, enhance and contribute to the nuances of work in the contemporary psychoanalytic clinic.

Readings to follow.

Training Weekend 26 & 27 April

Psychoanalysis and Buddhism

A Question and a Practice

Psychoanalysis and Buddhism are both rich in narratives and models of what it is to be alive. Buddhism is traditionally concerned for the welfare of all sentient beings and marks out human being as critical in relation to the faculty (Sanskrit 'Skhanda') of consciousness. It offers a path to deconstruct what we assume to be a satisfactory life and an enduring entity which we call a self.

Both are practices which aim to reveal and, in so doing, relieve suffering. The methods are familiar to our culture. The analytic couch and the meditator's cushion furnish the patient and the seeker in their path to discover what it might mean to be born as a human being and what might be the causes of our troubles.

We will do some practice and aim to create a contemplative space throughout the weekend to explore some of our own thinking in relation to psychoanalysis, the unconscious, desire, mindfulness, craziness, identity, sex, conflict, equanimity, caritas... all in no particular order.

Some reading to be going on with:

Zen Mind, Beginners Mind Shunryu Suzuki 1970

The Art of Solitude Stephen Batchelor 2020

Beyond the Pleasure Principle Sigmund Freud 1920

Stephen Gee
James O'Neill

Summer Term 2025

Seminar Leader to be Confirmed 1, 8, 15, 22 May

Title to follow

Details to follow

**Seminar Leader to be Confirmed
5, 12, 19, 26 June & 3 July**

Title to follow

Details to follow