

Cultural Psychodynamics: Reconceptualizing Self and Psyche in Society

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In this graduate seminar, we will read a wide range of works that, collectively, point the way toward a psychodynamically-nuanced view of cultural actors and institutions that is neither psychologically reductionistic nor socially determined. Readings reflect a careful mix of primary and secondary sources. The goal of the seminar is to provide an overview of the diversity of contemporary analytic conceptualizations of self and society, and to relate them to the more specific interests of anthropology and culture theory.

Virtually from its inception, Americanist anthropology was in dialogue with various strains of neo-Freudian psychoanalytic thought. Beginning with Boas, Kardiner, and the Columbia group, analytic ideas provided a starting point for thinking about the complex relations existing among social structure, cultural content, and the psychic life of the individual. Over the past half century, however, this two-way conversation between psychoanalytic and social theory has fallen out of vogue, and its early influences have been largely forgotten. However, as contemporary social theory becomes increasingly interested in questions of subjectivity, self, and the relationship of the individual to the social, psychodynamic models of mind have taken on renewed relevance. Indeed, contemporary social theory and psychoanalysis once again share considerable areas of conceptual engagement. Both are interested in boundaries and flows of all sorts—national, cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic. Questions of motivation, agency, and structure remain as complex and unresolved as ever. And as social theory has become increasingly interested in the individual and the subjective, contemporary psychoanalytic theory has increasingly focused on the relational, interpersonal, and cultural dimensions of experience. Given this broad conceptual overlap, the two fields can no longer afford to ignore one another.

Core issues and tensions we will be addressing in this course include: contemporary views of self and experience; meaning-making processes of subjectification and objectification; the relation of structure and agency; the role of desire, wish, emotion, and fantasy in cultural life; and the place of the unconscious in social theory. By the end of the course, students will have developed fluency in thinking through these complex issues, and will have gained a set of interdisciplinary mental tools—representing the best of psychoanalytic and social theory—for addressing these fundamental questions.

Required Texts:

C. Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object* (Columbia)
A. Elliott, *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Introduction* (Duke)
S. Mitchell, *Freud and Beyond* (Basic Books)
Course Reader with Articles

Recommended Texts:

S. Mitchell, *Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis* (Basic Books)
D. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Routledge)
A. Elliott, *Social Theory Since Freud*. (Routledge)

Course Requirements:

Each student will be expected to present material and lead the discussion during one of the seminar sessions, and prepare a 4 to 6 page paper in support of that presentation. In addition, each student will consult individually with the instructor to determine a final paper which will contribute 50% toward the final grade. Based upon a student's interests and place in their graduate training, final papers might consist of a research proposal that incorporates ideas drawn from the course, an extended discussion or elaboration of course readings, or some other project as agreed upon by student and instructor. Students will be responsible for presenting a 15 minute précis of their project at midterm, as well as a final presentation at the end of the quarter.

Grading:

Seminar Presentations and Participation: 50%
Research Paper: 50%

Course Schedule & Readings

Week 1: The Psychoanalytic Roots of Psychological Anthropology

Manson (1986). Abram Kardiner and the Neo-Freudian Alternative in Culture and Personality. In: G.W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.), *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict, and Others: Essays on Culture and Personality*.

Hallowell (1954) "The Self and its Behavioral Environment" Pp. 75-111 in *Culture and Experience*

Kardiner, Selections from *The Individual and His Society* and *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (TBA)

Week 2: Psychodynamic Approaches in Anthropology I: The Freudian Orthodoxy of Devereux, Spiro, and Obeyesekere

Spiro (1989) "Religious Systems as Culturally Constituted Defense Mechanisms." In Benjamin Kilbournes and L.L. Langness (eds). *Culture and Human Nature: Theoretical Papers of Melford Spiro*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 145-160.

Obeyesekere (1981) *Medusa's Hair*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 13-20, 40-51.

Devereux (1956) "Normal and Abnormal: The Key Problem of Psychiatric Anthropology." Pp. 23-45 in J. Casagrande and T. Gladwin (eds.) *Some Uses of Anthropology, Theoretical and Applied*. Washington, DC: Anthropological Society for Washington.

Week 3: Psychodynamic Approaches in Anthropology II: Non-Freudian Alternatives

Levy (1973) "Feeling" In *Tahitians: Mind and Experience in the Society Islands*.. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 271-308, 322-325.

Hollan (2000). Constructivist Models of Mind, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, and the Development of Culture Theory. *American Anthropologist* 102(3): 538-550.

Chodorow (1999). The Psyche in the Field. Pp. 172-218 in *The Power of Feelings: Personal Meaning in Psychoanalysis, Gender, and Culture*.

Week 4: Drive and Non-Drive Models of Psyche: Mitchell and Greenberg

Greenberg and Mitchell (1983). Select Chapters in *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* [Pp. 9-49, 79-118—Ch. 1 (Object Relations and Psychoanalytic Models); Ch. 2 (Sigmund Freud: The Drive/Structure Model), Ch.4 (Interpersonal Psychoanalysis)]

Mitchell (1988). Introduction: Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis. Pp. 1-12 in *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration* (Harvard University Press)

Week 5: Psychoanalytic Theories of the Self: Introduction

Mitchell (1993). Part II of Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis (Pp. 95-174—Self in Psychoanalysis: Multiple Selves, Singular Selve; True Selves, False Selves, and the Ambiguity of Authenticity; Aggression and the Endangered Self).

Week 6: Freud and the Introduction of the Split Subject

Elliott, *Psychoanalytic Theory*, pp. 1-67—Introduction; Chapter 1 (The Making of the Self: Divergences in Psychoanalytic Theory); Chapter 2 (Modern Culture and Its Repressed)

Freud (1900), The Interpretation of Dreams, pgs. 129-142 (To Be Provided)

Freud (1917), Mourning and Melancholia (To Be Provided)

Recommended: Elliott *Social Theory since Freud* Chapter 1, pgs. 1-20 (To Be Provided)

Week 7: Lacan: The Fractured and Decentered Self & the Role of the Imaginary

Elliott, pp. 99-124—Chapter 4 (Poststructuralist Anxiety: Subjects of Desire)

Mitchell and Black (1995) Jacques Lacan. Pp. 193-203 in *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*. (To be Provided)

Lacan, Selections (The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I; Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis; The Dream of Irma's Injection; The Dream of Irma's Injection (Conclusion) (To Be Provided)

Recommended: Elliott *Social Theory since Freud*, Chapter 2, pgs. 21-53

Week 8: Melanie Klein and the School of Object Relations: The Self Defined in Relation to Others

Elliott, pp 68-95—Chapter 3 (Object Relations, Kleinian Theory and Self Psychology)

Mitchell, Juliet (1987). "Introduction to *The Selected Melanie Klein*," pgs. 9-32 (to be Provided)

Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," "Love, Guilt and Reparation," "Some Theoretical Conclusions Concerning the Emotional Life of the Infant," "On Identification," "Envy and Gratitude"(From *The Selected Melanie Klein*; Provided in reader)

Week 9: Midterm Presentations

Week 10: Winnicott: True Self, False Self, and the Intermediate Areas of Experiencing

Mitchell, Stephen A. and Margaret J. Black (1995). The British Object Relations School: W.R.D. Fairbairn and D.W. Winnicott. Pp. 112 - 138 in *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*. (To be Provided)

Winnicott, Selections from *Playing and Reality* (Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena; Mirror-role Of Mother and Family in Child Development; Playing, Creative Activity and the Search for the Self; The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications)

Winnicott, Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self (To be provided)

Week 11: Bollas: Personal Idiom, Dissemination, and the Aesthetics of Self

Bollas, Selections from *The Shadow of the Object* (The Transformational Object; The Spirit of the Object; The Self As Object)

Bollas, Selections from *Being a Character* (Aspects of Self Experiencing; The Evocative Object; Being a Character) (To be provided).

Week 12: Kohut and Self-Psychology

Reading: Elliott, *Psychoanalytic Theory*, pgs. 95-98—"Self Psychology: Self Objects and Meaning

Mitchell, Stephen A. and Margaret J. Black. Psychologies of Identity and Self: Erik Erikson and Heinz Kohut. Pp. 139-169 in *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*. (To be Provided)

Kohut, Does Psychoanalysis Need a Psychology of the Self? Pp. 63-139 in *The Restoration of the Self*,

Week 13: Daniel Stern and the Interpersonal Self

Stern, "The Four Senses of Self," Chapter 3-8 in *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, pgs. 37-184

Week 14: Intersubjectivity and Feminist Approaches: Benjamin & Chodorow

Chodorow, "Selves and Emotions as Personal and Cultural Constructions", *The Power of Feelings*, pgs. 129-171 (To be provided in a reader)

Benjamin, "Introduction," "Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Inter-Subjectivity" in *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, pgs. 1-48 (To be provided)

Recommended Reading: Prager, "Memory, Culture and the Self," "Trauma and the Memory Wars," in *Presenting the Past, Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering*, pgs. 95-17

Elliott, "Sexuality, Complexity, Anxiety: The Encounter Between Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism," pgs. 115-131

Week 15: The Relevance of Psychodynamic Models to Anthropological Method and Theory

Devereux. Selected reading in "From Anxiety to Method"

Molino (2004). Rethinking Relations Between Psychoanalysis and Anthropology. Pp. 20-42 in *Culture, Subject, Psyche: Dialogues in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (Anthony Molino, ed.)

Week 16: Final Student Research Presentations