

Psychoanalysis: Colonial and Decolonial

Course Instructor:

Anup Dhar

Permanent Fellow, The Hans Kilian and Lotte Köhler Center (KKC) for Cultural Psychology and Historical Anthropology
Institute of Social Theory and Social Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, Ruhr-University Bochum

Psychoanalysis and the Colonial Encounter: This Course shall build on the early history of psychoanalysis in western Europe. It will explore how the conceptual contours of psychoanalysis were set up in western Europe. What was the nature of such a conceptual contour? What were its major tenets? What were the core concepts? The Course shall in its 1st segment take up two texts by Freud (a) *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis: New Series* and (b) *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* to tease out the core concepts of psychoanalysis. It will also explore the history of the ‘globalization of the concept of the unconscious’ in and through colonial modernity. Did psychoanalysis and colonialism unknowingly come together to birth the ‘psychoanalytic subject’? Did a particular ‘mirror of the self’ and ‘model of the psyche’ (marked by id-ego-superego) become Universal? Could there be other mirrors of the self and models of the psyche in non-western and non-modern worlds? Did psychoanalysis also shape western European and later North American conceptualisations of the colonised subject and colonised cultures? Did the black and brown skinned subject put on a ‘psychoanalytic mask’ to self-describe oneself?

The West is Not One: The Course shall explore – in the 2nd segment – how the ‘Original’ concepts of Freud have gone through multiple re-telling and re-formulations in the west. Have they *decolonized* the Original formulations? For example, (a) the foregrounding of ‘unconscious’, ‘transference’, ‘repetition’ and ‘drive’ as the “Four Fundamental” concepts of psychoanalysis by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan; (b) French feminist re-writings of the implicit androcentrism and phallogentrism in both Freud and Lacan; (c) Melanie Klein’s invocation of the pre-Oedipal mother-infant dyad; (d) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s critique of the Oedipalisation of experience and ‘The Repressive Hypothesis’.

Psychoanalysis and the Postcolonial-Decolonial: Given the fundamental mutability of theoretical notions or concepts, given the critique and re-writing of the concept of ‘repression’, ‘sexuation’ and ‘Oedipus’ by Indian psychoanalysts Girindrasekhar Bose and Sudhir Kakar, given the re-writing of psychoanalysis in Japan, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Argentina – in the 3rd segment – the Course shall foreground the epistemic contributions of *non-western spaces* and *non-modern times* to psychoanalysis. It will make space for the life world [*Lebenswelt*] and worldviews [*Weltanschauung*] of both the ‘non-west’ and the ‘non-modern’ in psychoanalysis. This Course thus makes a case for what Kakar designates as ‘genuine encounters’ or authentic conversations between west and non-west, modern and non-modern, colonial and postcolonial, postcolonial and decolonial – encounters that would take us beyond *unthinking imitation of western universals* and equally *reactive particularism*.

Representative Readings:

- Derrida, Jacques. 2007. "Geops psychoanalysis 'and the Rest of the World.'" In *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*. Ed. P. Kamuf and E. Rottenberg, 318–43. Stanford University Press.
- Jensen, Deborah., Keller, Richard C. and Anderson, Warwick. 2011. *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignties*. Duke University Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1973. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Vintage Books.
- Frush, Stephen. 1997. *For and Against Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.
- Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. 1958. "Interview to Indian Psycho-Analytical Society." In *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 28, 109–10.
- Hartnack, Christiane. 2001. *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India*. Oxford University Press.
- Homayounpour, G. 2012. *Doing Psychoanalysis in Tehran*. MIT Press.
- Kakar, Sudhir. 1997. *Culture and Psyche: Selected Essays*. Oxford University Press.
- Kapila, Shruti. 2007. "Freud and His Indian Friends: Religion, Psychoanalysis and Selfhood in Late Colonial India." In *Psychiatry and Empire*, edited by Megan Vaughan and Sloane Mahone, 125–52. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Khanna, Ranjana. 2003. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Duke University Press.
- Lacan, Jacques. 1988. *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Techniques of Psychoanalysis*, 1954–55. W. W. Norton.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1995. *The Savage Freud, and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*. Princeton University Press.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath. 1999. "Further Steps in Relativization: The Indian Oedipus Revisited." In *Vishnu on Freud's Desk: A Reader in Psychoanalysis and Hinduism*, Ed. T. G. Vaidyanathan and Jeffrey J. Kripal, 147–62. OUP.
- Said, Edward 2003. *Freud and the Non-European*. London: Verso, 2003.
- Shakry, E. O. (2017). *The Arabic Freud: psychoanalysis and Islam in modern Egypt*. Princeton University Press.
- Tajer, Débora. 2024. *Post-patriarchal, Post-heteronormative and Postcolonial Psychoanalysis: Psychoanalysis for All*. Routledge.