



LONDON WORKSHOP  
OF THE FREUDIAN FIELD

# SEXUAL LIFE

© Henri Gaudier-Brzeska



## Workshop Series 2024-25

### LWFF 2024-25 – Presentation of the Theme

#### Susana Huler

This upcoming academic year of 2024-25 we shall learn about the discoveries that Freud made about the sexual life of humans, and we shall do that by thoroughly reading the list of Freudian texts Jacques-Alain Miller has chosen for us.

Freud was astonished by the fact that respected and well-known physicians in Vienna had a contradictory relation to their own knowledge about the connection between neurosis and sexual facts. They could admit it in the mode of a joke, among themselves. The eminent gynaecologist Chrobak asked Freud to take a woman patient of his, that was flooded with meaningless anxiety and a strong and meaningful

attachment to the doctor.<sup>[i]</sup> He would say that this hysteric woman, a “*virgo intacta*” with an impotent husband, should be prescribed as a medicine:

*Penis Normalis Dossim Repetatur.*

But this knowledge would not be admitted as science and certainly not taught at the university of Vienna. Freud then applied what he had learned in psychoanalytic clinical work: his colleagues could refuse to know what they know.

It was years later that Freud learnt that this refusal to know occurred also “at home” and in writing “The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” he mentions “*two secessions which have taken place among the adherents of psycho-analysis [...] I knew that anyone might take to flight [...] everyone’s understanding of [psychoanalytic discoveries] is limited by his own repressions or rather, by the resistances which sustain them [...] I had to learn that the very same thing can happen with psychoanalysts as with patients in analysis.*”<sup>[ii]</sup>

Commenting on Adler’s secession, Freud writes that Adler’s work “*was intended to prove that psychoanalysis was wrong in everything and that it had only attributed so much importance to sexual motive forces because of its credulity in accepting the assertions of neurotics.*” Even the sexual act itself was desexualized by Adler’s “system,” as Freud would call it, because it claimed that “*the strongest motive force in the sexual act is the man’s intension of showing himself master of the woman – of being ‘on top’.*”<sup>[iii]</sup>

Summing up his reading of Adler’s text, Freud would conclude that “*The view of life which is reflected in the Adlerian system is founded exclusively on the aggressive drive; there is no room in it for love.*”<sup>[iv]</sup>

Then, in 1913, the second secession: Freud comments Jung’s letter from America in 1912 boasting that his modification of psychoanalysis had overcome resistances of many. But for Freud it was clear that: “*This modification which the Swiss were so proud of introducing was again nothing else but a **pushing into the background of the sexual factor in psychoanalytic theory***”<sup>[v]</sup> [...] “*and a new religio-ethical system has been created.*”<sup>[vi]</sup>

Jacques-Alain Miller sets out clearly, in his book *Analysis Laid Bare* that in its “*disrobing-of-being*” every psychoanalysis runs up against “*the rock of the assumption of sex.*”<sup>[vii]</sup> It would be a religion or a wisdom if it had the style of a funeral oration, meaning: a prayer for the assumption of death.

Lacan comments on these difficulties in accepting the discoveries of psychoanalysis. In 1956, he would say in his seminar:

*“I have already underscored on several occasions what at the start gave rise to so much outrage in analysis. It was not so much that it highlighted the role of sexuality, and that it played a part in the fact that this has become commonplace [...] rather, it was precisely that at the same time as introducing this notion, and far in excess of this, it introduced the paradox of an essential difficulty that is inherent, so to speak, in the approach to the sexual object.*”<sup>[viii]</sup>

It was extremely important for Freud to make clear that psychoanalysis is not a system of knowledge, and he never claimed to have built a general theory about what humans are. He describes Adler's and Jung's systems as two cheerless *Weltanschauungen*, whereas for him the drives are "the mighty and primordial melody" in "the symphony of life". [ix]

Yet, despite this firm position, Freud did not hesitate to declare:

*"We cannot escape the conclusion that the behaviour in love of men in the civilized world today bears the stamp altogether of psychical impotence [...] It is my belief that, however strange it may sound, we must reckon with the possibility that something in the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavourable to the realization of complete satisfaction".* [x]

Lacan would follow this path of Freud's investigation, since, according to him:

*"[Freud] has already said everything I am saying [...] There is something that the analytic experience shows us very well: that sexual jouissance, rarely establishes a relation."* [xi]

And we know, we experience, that the object we find bears the negative mark of its failing to be the object we lost.

Lacan remains faithful to Freud in taking a strong stand in his "Address on Child Psychoses" in 1967:

*"...can we measure up to what the Freudian subversion seems to call upon us to sustain, namely Being-unto-sex? We do not seem to be quite doughty enough to hold this position. Nor quite cheerful enough. Which proves, I think, that we are not quite there".* [xii]

The London Workshop of the Freudian Field in 2024-25 invites us to accept this challenge. If possible, with joy.

---

[i] Freud, S., "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement" (1914), SE XIV, p.14-5.

[ii] Ibid. p.48-9.

[iii] Ibid. p.51-3.

[iv] Ibid. p. 58.

[v] Ibid.

[vi] Ibid. 62.

[vii] Miller, J.-A. *Analysis Laid Bare*, (Paris: Libretto, 2023), p 22.

[viii] Lacan, *The Object Relation: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV* (Cambridge: Polity, 2020), p. 51-2

[ix] Ibid.

[x] Freud, S. "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love", SE XI, p.188-9.

[xi] Lacan, Milan 1973, "Psychoanalysis in its reference to the Sexual Relation"

[xii] Lacan, J., "Address on Child Psychoses", *Hurly-Burly* 8 (2012) p.272-273. Commented on by Jacques Borie in *Le Psychotique et le psychanalyste*, (Paris: Michele, 2012) p. 91.



# LONDON WORKSHOP OF THE FREUDIAN FIELD

“In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud was able to posit sexuality as essentially polymorphous, aberrant. The spell of a supposed infantile innocence was broken. Because it was imposed so early, I would almost say too early, this sexuality made us pass too quickly over an examination of what it essentially represents. That is to say that, with regard to the agency of sexuality, all subjects are equal, from the child to the adult – that they deal only with that part of sexuality that passes into the networks of the constitution of the subject, into the networks of the signifier – that sexuality is realised only through the operation of the drives in so far as they are partial drives, partial with regard to the biological finality of sexuality [...] If all is confusion in the discussion of the sexual drives it is because one does not see that the drive represents no doubt, but *merely* represents, and partially at that, the curve of the fulfilment of sexuality in the living being.”

(Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 176-7)

“... the only responsibility that exists is sexual responsibility”

(Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome*, p. 50)

## PROGRAMME

<b>09 Nov</b>	Susana Huler	“Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” (1905)
<b>14 Dec</b>	Laurent Dupont	“On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love” (1912)
<b>25 Jan</b>	Jérôme Lecaux	“The Taboo of Virginity” (1918)
<b>15 Feb</b>	Alexandre Stevens	“On Narcissism: An Introduction” (1914)
<b>15 Mar</b>	Véronique Voruz	“The Infantile Genital Organisation” (1923); “Medusa’s Head” (1922)
<b>05 Apr</b>	Vicente Palomera	“Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925); “Fetishism”(1927)
<b>07 Jun</b>	Neus Carbonell	“Libidinal Types” (1931); “Female Sexuality” (1931)

<b>11:00-13:00</b>	Development of the theme	} presented by the speaker
<b>14:30-16:30</b>	Clinical case & discussion	

### Venue:

#### UCH Education Centre

1st Floor West,  
250 Euston Road,  
London - NW1 2PG

### In Person & Zoom

The workshop will take place in person at University College Hospital. Those residing outside the UK will have the option to join us via Zoom.

### Tickets: £300

£150 for NHS trainees  
& for students / trainees  
under 27



Register

Scan left to register via our Weezevent site  
[www.londonworkshop-freudianfield.com](http://www.londonworkshop-freudianfield.com)

Scan left to go to our Website



Website