

# REPRESSION: HYPOTHESES

SPI CHICAGO 2014 AUTUMNAL STUDY CIRCLE, OVER TEA

"The doctrine of repression is the foundation stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests, the most essential part of it." So said Freud. Later attempts by Marxists like Otto Fenichel, Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno to appropriate or to synthesize Freudian psychoanalysis with critical politics, placed repression and its vicissitudes at the center of a critical theory of society and a natural history of domination. This work seemed to presage the youth, sexual, and feminist revolutions of the 1960s.



Yet these movements have left an ambiguous legacy, which has yet to open onto the fully emancipated humanity these writers sought. This study circle subjects the concept of repression to a dual examination: first, the internal dynamics of the concept and its functions within psychoanalytic theory and therapy; second, its place in an ongoing political history of sciences, concepts, and discourses. Throughout our investigation, we will have an eye toward the aims, achievements, and limits of freedom struggles, now and then.

**PART I: FOUNDATIONS** proceeds from Freud's metapsychological essay on repression through Marcuse's philosophico-historical extension of repression in his 1955 *Eros and Civilization*. It then examines Michel Foucault's influential attempt to circumscribe the critical potential of repression and other Freudian concepts in his 1976 *History of Sexuality, Volume I*. Suggested readings include selections from first and second generation Freud-Marxists like Fromm, Fenichel, and Adorno, as well as Foucault's lectures and essays placing his critique of repression in a political-historical framework.

**PART II:** having established the coordinates of a debate, we will move to examine the multiple fates of repression as a political paradigm of domination in revolutionary political moments of the twentieth century, as well as, more directly, the fate of liberationist politics since the 60s.

**WHO** You.

**WHAT** Repression.

**WHEN** Fridays 2:00pm-4:00pm // Starts November 7 // Ends December 19.

**WHERE** Home School 3 // 5705 S Kimbark Ave, Apt 2 // enter through wooden gate on 57th.

**HOW** Seminar discussion // close reading // over tea.

**WHY** Good question.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS?**

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# PART I, TOUR DE FOUNDATIONS

## TEXTS

Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization*.

Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality, Volume I: The Will to Know*.  
*pdfs provided for all other readings on <http://freudians.org/library/>*

## OVER TEA

### 11.7 WEEK I

Sigmund Freud, "Repression"

*suggested*: "Remembering, Repeating, Working Through"; "The Dream-Work"

### 11.14 WEEK II

Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, chapters 1 & 3

### 11.21 WEEK III

Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, chapter 4 & 6

*suggested*: "The Communist Manifesto"

### 11.28 NO REPRESSION, THANKSGIVING

### 12.5 WEEK IV

Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, part 1 and part 2

*suggested*: "Truth and Juridical Power" in *Power*; Max Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family"

### 12.12 WEEK V

Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, part 3 and 4

*suggested*: "The Examination" in *Discipline and Punish*; "The Concept of the Dangerous Individual" in *Power*; Max Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today"

### 12.19 WEEK VI, CLOSING

Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, part 5

"Roundtable: The Confession of the Flesh" in *Power/Knowledge*

Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man"