

---

## Person of the Month: Josef Breuer (1842-1925)

Ankit Patel<sup>1\*</sup>

<b>Born</b>	15 January 1842, Vienna, Austria.
<b>Died</b>	20 June 1925, Vienna, Austria
<b>Citizenship</b>	Austrian
<b>Known for</b>	Cathartic Method
<b>Education</b>	University of Vienna
<b>Influenced</b>	Sigmund Freud
<b>Fields</b>	Neurophysiology, Psychoanalysis



**J**osef Breuer, Austrian physician and physiologist who was acknowledged by Sigmund Freud and others as the principal forerunner of psychoanalysis. Breuer found, in 1880, that he had relieved symptoms of hysteria in a patient, Bertha Pappenheim, called Anna O. in his case study, after he had induced her to recall unpleasant past experiences under hypnosis. He concluded that neurotic symptoms result from unconscious processes and will disappear when these processes become conscious. The case of Anna O. introduced Freud to the cathartic method (the “talking cure”) that was pivotal in his later work. Breuer described his methods and results to Freud and referred patients to him. With Freud he wrote *Studien über Hysterie* (1895), in which Breuer’s treatment of hysteria was described. Later disagreement on basic theories of therapy terminated their collaboration.

Breuer’s earlier work dealt with the respiratory cycle, and in 1868 he described the Hering-Breuer reflex involved in the sensory control of inhalations and exhalations in normal breathing. In 1873 he discovered the sensory function of the semicircular canals in the inner ear and their relation to positional sense or balance. He practiced medicine and was physician to many members of the Viennese medical faculty.

---

<sup>1</sup> Clinical Psychology, Dept. of Psychology, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat

\*[Responding Author](#)

**Received: March 28, 2017; Revision Received: April 5, 2017; Accepted: April 25, 2017**

## Person of the Month: Josef Breuer (1842-1925)

### TIMELINE

- 1842: 15 January 1842 Born at Vienna, Austrian Empire
- 1858: His father tutored him until he was eight, and he then entered the Akademisches Gymnasium of Vienna, from which he graduated.
- 1859: General University studies, Breuer entered the medical school of the University of Vienna.
- 1867: Completed his medical studies.
- 1868: The work was conducted at the military medical school of Vienna (the Josephinum) in collaboration with its professor of physiology, Ewald Hering, and the results were published in 1868.
- 1868: Breuer married Matilda Altmann on 20 May 1868, and she bore him five children: Robert, Bertha Hammerschlag, Margaret Schiff, Hans, and Dora.
- 1870: Friedrich Goltz suggested that the semicircular canals were the sense organs that detect the position of the head relative to the gravitational field; he believed that the lowest part of each canal would, as the result of the weight of the endolymph, be stimulated by pressure.
- 1871: Breuer relinquished his assistantship and entered private practice.
- 1873: He discovered the sensory function of the semicircular canals in the inner ear and their relation to positional sense or balance.
- 1874: Breuer's first article (printed in 1874) concerned mainly the explanation and interpretation of previous observation on animals and humans (thereby resembling Mach's article); his second article, which appeared a year later, reported the results of many experiments, carried out chiefly on pigeons.
- 1875: Breuer qualified as Privatdozent in internal medicine.
- 1880: In the summer of 1880, while attending a man who was seriously ill with a peripleuritic abscess, Breuer observed the onset of a serious psychological disturbance in the man's daughter, "Anna O.," who was also his patient.
- 1885: He resigned the position on 7 July 1885, however, apparently because he felt he had been improperly denied access to patients for teaching purposes; he also refused to let the surgeon C. A. T. Billroth nominate him for the title of professor extraordinarius.
- 1894: He was elected to the Viennese Academy of Science.
- 1925: 20 June 1925 Died at (aged 83) Vienna, Austria

### WORKS

- *Zwei Fälle von Hydrophobie*. In: Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift 18 (1868). Sp. 178 f., 210-213.
- *Das Verhalten der Eigenwärme in Krankheiten*. In: Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift 18 (1868). Sp. 982-985, 998-1002.
- *Die Selbststeuerung der Athmung durch den Nervus vagus*. In: Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien, math.-naturw. Kl. 58/2 (1868), S. 909-937.
- *Bemerkungen zu Senator's „Beiträge zur Lehre von der Eigenwärme und dem Fieber“*. In: Arch. path. Anat., Berlin 46 (1869), S. 391 f.

### Person of the Month: Josef Breuer (1842-1925)

- *Über Bogengänge des Labyrinths*. In: Allg. Wien. med. Ztg. 18 (1873), S. 598, 606.
- *Über die Function der Bogengänge des Ohrlabyrinthes*. In: Med. Jb., Wien 1874. S. 72-124.
- *Zur Lehre vom statischen Sinne (Gleichgewichtsorgan). Vorläufige Mittheilung*. In: Anz. Ges. Ärzte, Wien 1873. Nr. 9 (17. Dezember 1873), S. 31-33.
- *Beiträge zur Lehre vom statischen Sinne (Gleichgewichtsorgan, Vestibularapparat des Ohrlabyrinths). Zweite Mittheilung*. In: Med. Jb., Wien 1875. S. 87-156.
- *Neue Versuche an den Ohrbogengängen*. In: Arch. Physiol. 44 (1889), S. 135-152.
- *Über die Funktion der Otolithen-Apparate*. In: Arch. Physiol. 48 (1891), S. 195-306.
- *Über Brommastitis*. In: Wien. med. Presse 35 (1894), Sp. 1028.
- *Über Bogengänge und Raumsinn*. In: Arch. Physiol. 68 (1897), S. 596-648.
- *Die Krisis des Darwinismus und die Teleologie*. Vortrag, gehalten am 2. Mai 1902. In: *Vorträge und Besprechungen*. (1902), S. 43-64. Nachdruck der Ausgabe 1902: Edition diskord, Tübingen 1986.
- *Über Galvanotropismus bei Fischen*. In: Zbl. Physiol., Wien 16 (1902), S. 481-483.
- *Studien über den Vestibularapparat*. In: Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien, math.-naturw. Kl. 112/3(1903), S. 315-394.
- *Über den Galvanotropismus (Galvanotaxis) bei Fischen*. In: Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien, math.-naturw. Kl. 114/3 (1905), S. 27-56.
- *Über das Gehörorgan der Vögel*. In: Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien, math.-naturw. Kl. 116/3 (1907), S. 249-292.
- *Bemerkungen zu Dr. H. Abels Abhandlung „über Nachempfindungen im Gebiete des kinästhetischen und statischen Sinnes“*. In: Zschr. Psychol. Physiol. Sinnesorg. 45 (1907), 1. Abt., S. 78-84.
- *Über Ewald's Versuch mit dem pneumatischen Hammer (Bogengangsapparat)*. In: Zschr. Sinnesphysiol. 42 (1908), S. 373-378.
- *Curriculum vitae* [1923]. In: Dr. Josef Breuer 1842-1925. Wien o. J. [1927]. S. 9-24.
- *Ein telepathisches Dokument*. In: Umschau 28 (1924). S. 215 f.
- Josef Breuer / Rudolf Chrobak: *Zur Lehre vom Wundfieber. Experimentelle Studie*. In: Med. Jb., Wien 22/4 (1867). S. 3-12.
- Josef Breuer / Sigmund Freud: *Über den psychischen Mechanismus hysterischer Phänomene. Vorläufige Mittheilung*. In: Neurol. Zbl. 12 (1893), S. 4-10, 43-47; zugleich in: Wien. med. Blätter 16 (1893), S. 33-35, 49-51.
- Sigmund Freud / Josef Breuer: *Studien über Hysterie*. Franz Deuticke, Leipzig + Wien 1895. Neudruck: 6. Auflage. Fischer, Frankfurt a. M. 1991. ISBN 3-596-10446-7
- Josef Breuer / Alois Kreidl: *Über die scheinbare Drehung des Gesichtsfeldes während der Einwirkung einer Centrifugalkraft*. In: Arch. Physiol. 70 (1898), S. 494-510.
- Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach / Josef Breuer: *Ein Briefwechsel. 1889-1916*. Bergland-Verlag, Wien 1969

[According To Wikipedia: Retrieved April 23, 2017]

## Person of the Month: Josef Breuer (1842-1925)

### REFERENCES

Breuer, Josef." *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. . Retrieved April 23, 2017 from Encyclopedia.com:<http://www.encyclopedia.com/science/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/breuer-josef>

The Editors of Encyclopædia (2016) "*Britannica Josef Breuer*", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Retrieved April 23, 2017 from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Josef-Breuer>

Hawkins, J.E. and Schacht, J. "*The Emergence of Vestibular Science*" (Part 8 of "Sketches of Othistory") in "Audiology and Neurotology," April 2005.

### Photo Credit: Encyclopedia Britannica

**How to cite this article:** A Patel (2017), Person of the Month: Josef Breuer (1842-1925), *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 4, Issue 3, ISSN 2348-5396 (e) | ISSN: 2349-3429 (p), DIP: 18.01.001/20170403