Freud’s Ewige Wiederkehr

How the psychoanalytic movement doesn’t stop making the difference

Mark Kinet

Wien Haus, Brussels, Freud’s Anniversary Lecture, May 8th, 2006
Introduction

• Freud’s mother tongue
• Adolescence and ‘Jenseits des Lustprinzips’
• Sturm und Drang
• Iris Murdoch: ‘Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!’
• We are other than mammals
• The calf-becoming-a-bull knows what to do
• Choice: convention vs invention
• Human greatness

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Wiederkehr

- Freud’s nine lives
- Newton, Freud and the inverse square law
- Rise and Fall of the Freudian empire
- Measurable symptoms vs subjective reality
- Sofisms about psychoanalysis
- Evolution and expansion
Science

- Scientific comeback
- Treatment of choice
- W.H.O. and Depression
- Symptom and surface
- Diagnostic bible and Dark Ages
Wiederholung(-szwang)

- The stars
- Darwinism
- Genetics
- The parenthood constellation
Schmerz

• Long time dependency
• Translation, language, symbolisation
• Schmerz, Erregungszuwachs, Reizschütz
• Psychic skin
• Descartes modified: *Elle* pense, donc je suis
• Nature and nurture
• Brain and mind

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Character is fate

- Heracleitos
- Inside not outside/insight not out sight
- Good news
Different anthropologies

- Medicine and (cognitive) behaviourism
- Reason and optimism
- Psychoanalysis and the tragic position
- Children of Narcissus and Oedipus
- Normality and other disorders
- Extra oxygen: Sempé’s cartoon
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Common sense

- Descartes’ irony
- Free for sale
- The ominous image
- Conceal or heal
- Great expectations
- Magical formula
Shakespeare: Macbeth and King Lear

- Lady Macbeth
- Une anatomie du Mal
- The patient’s plea
- Passionate blindness
- Hegel and the age of innocence
- King Lear: exteriorisation

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Reason and rationality

• Hume: reason is the slave of the passions
• Hamlet: there is reason in it
• A very special reason
• The Unconscious: headquarters of repetition
The symptom

• Medicine and the sign of illness
• Medical progress
• Medicalisation of happiness and well being
• ‘Cito, tuto et iucunde!’
• The only person who welcomes change is a wet baby!
Science

• True science vs Holy Science
• Physics envy
• Complexity reduced
• Complexity repressed
• ‘Geisteskrankheiten sind Gehirnkrankheiten’
• Psychiatry loses its mind!
The Freudian momentum

- Content and significance
- Abstinence and neutrality
- Listening vs looking
- Docta ignorantia
- Free association and personal choice
- No hubris nor pride

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The psychoanalytic symptom

- Involuntary
- Repetitive
- Not or misunderstood
- Help
- Pleasure and suffering
- Self-treatment
- ‘Le patient a toujours raison’
- Symptomsubstitution: Verschiebung
- Wiederkehr des Verdrängten
Transference/Ubertragung

- (De)formative influence
- Nobel Prize Winner Eric Kandel
- Explicit vs implicit memory system
- What we have *made* of the Other in infancy
- The fantasied Other
Unbehagen in der Kultur

• Drive and conflict
• A strange pleasure
• The subversive truth
• Most intimate and most alien
• The plague and the blow
• Copernicus, Darwin and Freud
Das Ding(-an-sich)

• ‘All I am is what I’m going after’
• Drive and passion
• The real Thing
• Infinite bliss
• Ewige Wiederkehr
• Menschlich, alzumenschlich
• Brave New World?

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Questions?

Everything you always wanted to know about...

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The End

Thank you for your attention and

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