

SIGMUND FREUD VORLESUNG 2004

Leo Bersani

Psychoanalysis and the Aesthetic Subject

Begrüßung: Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen, Rektor der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien

Moderation: Inge Scholz-Strasser, Vorstandsvorsitzende der Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung

Is a psychoanalytic aesthetic possible? The failure of psychoanalysis to develop a persuasive account of artistic processes, as well as of particular works of art, has frequently been noted. This failure has most often been explained in terms of a reductive bias: the tendency to "treat" the work of art as a variation on the clinical case, as a socially validated instance of psychic regression. I will argue that the problem should be reformulated in terms of antagonistic approaches to the subject's relation to the world. Beginning with Freud, psychoanalysis has profoundly described the human aptitude for transforming the world into a reflection of subjectivity. Art, on the other hand, makes a non-discursive argument both for the existence of the world as world, and for the human subject's non-projective presence in the world. Finally, however, what I will call the aesthetic subject may in fact be compatible with the psychoanalytically defined subject - although this reconciliation will require a re-definition of the unconscious as no longer dependent on a psychology of inner depths.

Leo Bersani (USA)

Professor, Department of French, University of California at Berkeley; Visiting Lecturer, Collège de France, Paris ; Visiting Lecturer, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales; Visiting Professor, Dept. of Romance Languages, Harvard University

His books include: *Théorie et violence: Freud et l'art* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984), *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), *Forming Couples: Godard, Almodóvar, Malick* (tentative title), co-authored with *Ulysse Dutoit* (*British Film Institute*, scheduled for Spring 2004)