WHERE IS THE UNCONSCIOUS TODAY?

Conference in English and German

Friday, 17 March, 8 p.m.
Society of Physicians in Vienna
Frankgasse 8, 1090 Vienna

und

Saturday, 18 March, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sigmund Freud Museum
Berggasse 19, 1090 Vienna

In this international conference, we intend to examine the different aspects of the unconscious, its history, its effects and importance in today’s analytic, sociopolitical and aesthetic discourses. While the unconscious was traditionally thought to be located in dreams, slips of the tongue, parapraxes and jokes, and linked with the psychic operation of repression, nowadays the unconscious is conceptualized more horizontally: it is thought to be experienced more in the in-between of the analytic dyad, at least for psychoanalysts identified with the Bionian, Winnicottian and Relational School. In contrast, the schools of Lacan are more bound to Freud’s early model of the unconscious and locate it in the signifiers of the spoken language of the analysand. Is the unconscious thus to be detected in words or in the in-between or how are we to think of these ‘princely’ roads to the unconscious? Given the fact that not a few of those processes which guide and limit us do not reach consciousness, other disciplines than psychoanalysis – the so called “Science of the Unconscious” – have also searched for the unconscious. Some claim that art and literature is the most privileged “playground” of the unconscious, others think that it is possible to find it in the brain. The conference approaches these discourses and attempts by an interdisciplinary perspective.

A cooperation of the Sigmund Freud Museum and the Society of Physicians in Vienna
PROGRAMME

Friday, 17 March, 8 p.m., Billrothhaus of the Society of Physicians in Vienna, Frankgasse 8, 1090 Vienna

Opening lecture of the conference in English

Eli Zaretsky: Freudianism and the Twentieth Century Left
Welcome by Monika Pessler
Moderated by Jeanne Wolff Bernstein

Saturday, 18 March, 9:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. at the Sigmund Freud Museum, Berggasse 19, 1090 Vienna

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.: Panel I (English)
Giuseppe Civitarese: The Un/Conscious as a Psychoanalytic Function of Personality
Bernard Toboul: Language and the Real
Moderated by Jeanne Wolff Bernstein

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Panel 2 (German)
Jan Lohl: ‘Ich will mein Deutschland wiederhaben’. Zur psychoanalytischen Sozialpsychologie der Fremdenfeindlichkeit
Helmut Dahmer: ‘Jews’ und ‘Alis’. Um-Adressierung eines Vorurteils
Moderated by Markus Brunner

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.: Panel 3 (German)
August Ruhs: Das Unbewusste zwischen Festplatte und Bildschirm
Edith Seifert: Das Unbewusste als ‘Missing Link’. Über den ‘Gap’ zwischen Neurowissenschaft und psychoanalytischer Theorie
Moderated by Daniela Finzi
OPENING LECTURE
Welcome by Monika Pessler, moderated by Jeanne Wolff Bernstein
Friday, 17 March
8 p.m.

Eli Zaretsky
Freudianism and the Twentieth Century Left

By Political Freud I mean the uses to which Freud was put by twentieth century radicals, political intellectuals and reformers. I will argue that there were three stages in this process: repression, sublimation, and regression: first, Freud's themes of the father complex and group psychology were used to analyze both the dictatorships of the last century and to analyze racism, especially its quintessential form – the lynch mob (repression). Second, Freudian thought was mobilized by the Frankfurt School, and by protagonists of the African American and Afro-Caribbean radicalism to criticize mass consumption society (sublimation). Finally, Freudianism was used by the New Left and the women’s movement of the 1970s, which internalized Freud’s ideas even as they turned them against Freud to define a new politics, today’s feminism, multiculturalism and gay liberation (regression). What would a fourth stage look like today?

Prof. Eli Zaretsky, PhD, teaches history at the Eugene Lang College – New School for Liberal Arts in New York City since 1999. His research focuses at twentieth century cultural history, the theory and history of capitalism, and the history of the family. He was a visiting fellow at the Australian National University, Canberra in 2005 and an affiliated scholar at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna in 1995. He received the Robert J. Stoller Foundation Award in 1995 for his essay “Bisexuality and the Ambivalent Legacy of Psychoanalysis”. His publications include Political Freud (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis (Vintage, 2005), Why America Needs a Left (Polity, 2013), and Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life (Harper & Row, 1976). He authored numerous articles including “Psychosocial and Jewish History”, in: Encyclopedia of Jewish History (forthcoming); “From Psychoanalysis to Cybernetics: The Case of Her”, in: American Imago 72 (2015); “Freud’s Theory of Memory”, in: Dimitri Nikulin: Memory (Oxford University Press, 2015); “Narcissism, Personal Life and Identity: The Place of the 1960s in the History of Psychoanalysis”, in: Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society (2008). His works have been translated into French, Russian, Spanish, Polish, German and various other languages.
Giuseppe Civitarese
The Un/Conscious as a Psychoanalytic Function of Personality

The concept of the unconscious that is increasingly inspiring the development of a new paradigm in psychoanalysis is due to Wilfred Bion and is different from that of Sigmund Freud. Here the unconscious is seen as a psychoanalytical function of personality, something that is absorbed from the mother at birth as a growing capacity to give personal meaning to experience. Learning to think means learning to “dream” the real in order to make of it a phenomenal, knowable, and liveable reality. Dreaming is the place in which we repeatedly try to give substance to the mind, or rather, vice versa, to reintegrate the mind into the body to restart what Donald Winnicott termed “personalization”, a process that consists of the progressive integration of body and psyche. As Thomas H. Ogden says, dreaming is our profoundest form of thinking; it is not the product of the differentiation between conscious and unconscious mind, but almost the reverse: it is dreaming that creates and maintains this differentiation and that constitutes the main medium through which we become human.

Giuseppe Civitarese, MD, PhD, is a training and supervising analyst in the ‘Italian Psychoanalytic Society’ (SPI), and a member of the ‘American Psychoanalytic Association’ (APsaA) and of the ‘International Psychoanalytic Association’ (IPA). He lives, and is in private practice, in Pavia, Italy. He lectures in Italy and internationally and publishes widely on various subjects including the theory of the analytic field, Bion and the post-Bionian psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic criticism. Currently he is the editor of the Rivista di Psicoanalisi, the official journal of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society.


He has also co-edited: L’ipocondria e il dubbio: L’approccio psicoanalitico [Hypochondria and doubt: the psychoanalytic approach] (Milano, 2011); Le parole e i sogni [The words and the dreams] (Alpes Italia, 2015); The W. R. Bion Tradition: Lines of Development – Evolution of Theory and Practice over the Decades (Karnac, 2014); Advances in Psychoanalytic Field Theory: International Field Theory Association Round Table Discussion (Routledge, 2016); he is the only editor of Why Bion? Why Now? Reading ‘A Memoir of the Future’ (Routledge, 2017, in press).
Bernard Toboul

**Language and the Real**

Under the strange forms of our psychic phenomena, an inside division reveals itself as a stranger in us, according to Freud. This is what Lacan calls “the Real”. Through his linguistic turn, Lacan describes the productions of the unconscious as “beings of language”. During the last years of his work in progress, he goes beyond the linguistic model and conceives the unconscious from the real onwards.

Bernard Toboul is psychoanalyst in Paris, member of the psychoanalytical association ‘Espace analytique’ and the psychoanalytical school ‘Ecole de psychanalyse des forums du champ lacanien’.

***

Jeanne Wolff Bernstein works as a psychoanalyst in Vienna. She is the past president, and supervising and personal analyst at PINC (Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California) in San Francisco. She is on the faculty at PINC and at The Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität, Vienna, and NYU Post-Doctoral Program for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. She was the 2008 Fulbright Freud Visiting Lecturer of Psychoanalysis at the Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna, Austria and is the chair of the Advisory Board at the Sigmund Freud Privatstiftung, Vienna. She is a member of the ‘Wiener Arbeitskreis für Psychoanalyse’. She has published numerous articles on the interfaces between psychoanalysis, the visual arts and film. Her most recent publications include “Tattoos/Hysteria (in: Sukhanova, Ekaterina/Thomashoff, Hans-Otto, ed.: Body Image and Identity in Contemporary Societies, Routledge, 2015), “Between the Artist’s Studio and the Psychoanalytic Office: A Comparison of Lucian Freud’s and Sigmund Freud’s Interior Space” (in: Sarnitz, August/Scholz-Strasser, Inge, ed.: Private Utopia, Cultural Setting of the Interior in the 19th and 20th century, De Gruyter, 2015). Her text “Living between two languages, a bi-focal perspective” has been published in Locating Ourselves: Immigration in the Analytic Encounter (ed. Julia Beltsiou, Routledge, 2016).
Jan Lohl  

'Ich will mein Deutschland wiederhaben'. Zur psychoanalytischen Sozialpsychologie der Fremdenfeindlichkeit

Xenophobic resentment towards “Muslims” and “refugees” has spread rapidly in German majority society. This resentment is the subject of a research project that investigates the effect of right-wing populist propaganda in Germany (PEGIDA, AfD) with regard to psychoanalytic and sociological aspects: what representations of the self and the other can be found here? What constitutes their affective appeal? What forms of contemporary subjectivity does right-wing populism seize on, either consciously or unconsciously? The lecture presents selected outcomes of this project: firstly, right-wing populist propaganda addresses the melancholy conflicts that are connected with the neoliberal ideology of performance and optimisation and for which a crooked cure (Freud) is offered in the form of hostility towards foreigners. Secondly, the lecture empirically presents archaic projections of maleness and sexuality that accompany the constitution of hostility towards foreigners and that reveal it to be an irrational handling of a crisis of the patriarchy.

Dr. Jan Lohl, Dipl. Sozialwiss. and supervisor (DGSv), is a research associate at the Sigmund Freud Institute and associate lecturer at the Institute of Sociology at Frankfurt University, where he represented the Chair of Psychoanalytic Social Psychology from 2015 until 2016. He previously worked at the Institute of Sociology at Hanover University, completing his PhD on “Emotional legacy and right-wing extremism”. Jan Lohl is currently writing his habilitation thesis on the “Social history of supervision” and conducting a research project investigating the psychological effect of right-wing populist propaganda. The focus of his research is on psychoanalytic social psychology, psychoanalysis and social research, right-wing extremism, nationalism and anti-Semitism research.

What we call “anti-semitism” and (together with Leon Pinsker and Pierre-André Taguieff) should better describe as ‘judeo-phobia’, is a special case of xenophobia that has shaped the history of Europe. For centuries, Christian majorities relative to the Jewish minorities spread among them have rehearsed their dealings with ‘aliens’ here. In the phase between the decline of ancient culture and the rise of the late medieval/early modern period cities of traders and craftsmen, the Jewish diaspora provided mainly long-distance, monetarised trade between the west and east, thus setting up one of the pre-conditions for the later development of capitalism. Hostility towards Jews, as it developed at the time and as an apparatus still lives on today, arose through multiple, abstractive excess pressure vis-à-vis the majority. By necessity, the Jewish diaspora had made ‘progress in the intellectual realm’ (Sigmund Freud): as a transnational ‘people without a land’, it had learned to be at home everywhere and nowhere. As a ‘people-class’ (Abraham Léon) or ‘pariah caste’ (Max Weber) in feudal society, it monetarised the barter trade, thereby contributing to the disintegration of traditional ways of living. As a religious community, it worshipped the invisible ‘God of the Old Covenant’, which requires no incarnation. The ‘antisemitism without Jews’ recorded after the Holocaust has gradually lost its historical, specific characteristics. Now available as generalised xenophobia, it serves the majority today for marking out new objects of hate, whether (Muslim) migrants or refugees fleeing misery or war.

**Helmut Dahmer**

‘Jews’ und ‘Alis’. Um-Adressierung eines Vorurteils


***

**Dr. Markus Brunner** is a social psychologist and sociologist. He teaches at the Sigmund Freud Private University in Vienna and Linz, is co-coordinator of the master’s program „Social Psychology and Psychosocial Practice“ and is training at the „Seminar for Group Analysis Zurich“. He is a member of the board of the „Society for Psychoanalytical Social Psychology“, member of the coordinating team of the „AG Political Psychology“, co-editor of the journals Freie Assoziation (Free Association) and Psychologie und Gesellschaftskritik (Psychology and Social Criticism) and researches and publicises in the field of psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic social psychology and critical social theory. His focus is the research of nationalism, national-socialism and antisemitism, trauma theories and discourses and psychoanalytical concept discussions. Sporadically, he is also writing about cultural industry, aesthetic theory and modern art, especially performance art, film and recently also about comics.
August Ruhs

Das Unbewusste zwischen Festplatte und Bildschirm

The topos of the unconscious as a relevant constituent of human inner life and the assumption of unconscious processes as powerful determinants of our behaviour found their way into human science at a very late stage, and only sporadically. The discourse and the instruments that Freud devised for its study and that have led to a specifically Freudian unconscious were also greatly interested in the construction and location of this agency. Freud soon came to regard previous assumptions regarding psychophysical parallelism as being on the wrong track and discarded them, with the result that a strictly psychological conception led him to an unconscious constituted on the logic of language that proved to be a reservoir of mental acts and representations that are fended off and sequestered from consciousness. The question of its location was solved by elaborating systems with specific properties within a model psychic apparatus that would have to be conceived far from any anatomical localisations, biochemical and physiological processes on the basis of neural networks. In view of the possible relations between these systems, must we assume a dual locality or dual registration or is the transition from one system to another an interaction of changes in state? This Freudian question was later reprised by structural psychoanalysis, with Lacan taking a different view both to Freud and to Laplanche and Leclaire.

The emergence of modern neuroscience and neuropsychoanalysis focusing on the mind has seen the return of the unconscious as a topic for negotiation. In this context, science operates on the one hand with an unconscious that largely corresponds to the category of the preconscious; on the other, it is once again taking up positions that correspond to the psychophysical parallelism abandoned by traditional psychoanalysis. A procedural, desubjectivised unconscious is coming to the fore that is being investigated in the real body beyond representations capable of becoming conscious and behaviour-determining phantasms. Translated into the terms of a cerebral computer, scientific scrutiny is focusing on questions of hardware and operating system and only to a lesser extent on working with and on the software.

Edith Seifert

Das Unbewusste als ‘Missing Link’. Über den ‘Gap’ zwischen Neurowissenschaft und psychoanalytischer Theorie

The starting point of my lecture is the hypothesis that while neuroscience makes an important contribution to psychoanalysis in terms of the theory of science, it is ultimately irreconcilable with the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis. Although Freud’s dictum that the ego “is not master in its own house” holds true for both the logic of the central nervous system and for that of the unconscious, both disciplines focus on different goals. Whereas neuroscience aims to link up all aspects of the living, the emphasis of psychoanalysis is on their inevitable division.


Daniela Finzi is a cultural scientist and a literary scholar. Her research focus is psychoanalysis, cultural theory and gender studies. She is working at the Sigmund Freud Museum and teaches at the University of Vienna since 2009; she is a member of the board and head of the research department of the Sigmund Freud Foundation since 2016. She is co-editor of the series Sigmund Freuds Werke: Wiener Interdisziplinäre Kommentare and of aka | Texte (Turia+Kant). Her publications include the monograph Unterwegs zum Anderen? Literarische Er-Fahrungen der kriegerischen Auflösung Jugoslawiens aus deutschsprachiger Perspektive (Francke, 2013); the collective volume Die Lust an der Kultur/Theorie. Transdisziplinäre Intervetionen (with Anna Babka and Clemens Ruthner; Turia+Kant, 2012) und most recently the articles „Übertragung“, in: Schmidt, Matthias ed.: (Rück)Sendungen. Zu Jacques Derridas Envois/Sendungen. (Turia+Kant, 2015); „Verunsicherungswissenschaft Psychoanalyse“, in: Lind, Gerald/Pany, Doris ed.: Amivalenzraum Universität (Neofelis, 2016) and „Zwischen Freud’schem ‘Familienroman’ und Bal’scher ‘Cultural Analysis‘: Edmund des Waals Der Hase mit den Bernsteinaugen, in: Härts, Endre ed.: Ringstraßen. Kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherungen an die Stadtarchitektur von Wien, Budapest und Szeged. (Praesens, 2016).