

there is strong existential appeal, the back-up of intellectual rigour and the tolerance of revelation. Here, with Spinoza, there is the recipe for true individual enlightenment. In order to be convinced that what we do is 'right' we need, he believes, a 'code of right' - a set of rules. Using such a method, we can employ rationality to understand our approach to life, set ourselves rules and keep them up to date by looking continually beyond our self. Spinoza provides us with a 'sanction for personal change' which allows us both a sense of freedom from dogma and a sense of belief in honest action. Spinoza accepts that we do not have a complete or 'perfect' understanding of our mental state. Consequently, we do not have a complete grasp of our moral integrity. Because of this, we have to construct the best set of moral guidelines we can and be sure that we know them. Thus armed, we can continually apply this remembered code in all circumstances in which we find ourselves. Spinoza suggests that practical application of moral guidelines in different circumstances entails reflection on examples of how these moral guidelines could be applied in the world and the results of their application. This inner reflection of outcomes beyond the self is a valuable aspect of personal progress in a world which is naturally 'beyond the self'. Reflection, particularly on bad outcomes, is well remembered and has great personal impact and we should test our beliefs against such scenarios. Instead of looking for the best possible outcome, we should look to the avoidance of the worst. If we start from the position of realising what could be the worst outcome, then any outcome other than the worst will be an improvement. Nothing of our self will realise any level of self-deceit when acting for change from a worst possible scenario. Our actions will always be true and honest manifestations of change. Can the Socrates do better? Or will he just keep barking in the background?

References

Hume, D. (1975) *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, L.A. Selby-Bigge (ed.), revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford, Clarendon).

MacDonald Ross, G. (1984) *Leibniz* (Oxford University Press).

Rabel, G. (1963) *Kant* (Oxford, Clarendon).

Suggested Further Reading:

There are no better introductions to important philosophers than the Oxford Very Short Introduction (VSI) series, formerly, with a few changes, the Past Masters (PM) series. I recommend these: *Plato*, R.M. Hare (PM) or Julia Annas (VSI); *Descartes*, Tom Sorell (PM and VSI); *Leibniz*, G. MacDonald Ross (PM); *Locke*, John Dunn (PM and VSI); *Hume*, A.J. Ayer (PM and VSI); *Kant*, Roger Scruton (PM and VSI); *Spinoza*, Roger Scruton (PM and VSI). Sadly, and surprisingly missing from the Oxford list is Berkeley. Here look at Jonathan Dancy, *Berkeley: An Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1987, or you might find a copy of G.J. Warnock's *Berkeley* (originally Pelican (1953), then Peregrine (1969), and now reissued by Blackwell (1982)).

Beyond the introductions, I suggest the following:

Berkeley (1975) *Philosophical Works, including the works on vision*, Introduction and Notes by M.R. Ayers (London, J.M. Dent).

Descartes (2 vols., vol. 2, 1984, vol. 1, 1985), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. by J. Nottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch (Cambridge University Press).

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Kant, I. (1933) *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N. Kemp Smith (London, Macmillan).

Leibniz (1975) *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*, trans. and ed. by L.E. Loemker (Dordrecht, Kluwer),

Locke, J. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, P.H. Nidditch (ed.) (Oxford, Clarendon),

Plato (1989) *Plato: The Collected Dialogues Including the Letters*, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (eds.), (Princeton University Press).

Spinoza, B. (2000) *Ethics*, trans. and ed. by G.H.R. Parkinson (Oxford University Press).

Editor

Wittgenstein and Freud: Philosophical Method vs. Psychoanalysis

Wittgenstein never wrote a paper on Freud or on Psychoanalysis. Everything that we know about Wittgenstein's criticisms on Freudian psychoanalysis has been either passed on to us through a friend of Wittgenstein, namely Rush Rhees, who carefully noted some of his conversations with Wittgenstein on the subject (see "Conversations on Freud" in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*), or through some minor remarks made by Wittgenstein himself in his writings. This should not be surprising since most of Wittgenstein's writings are either a sort of collection of remarks or lectures (e.g. *Philosophical Investigations*).

Wittgenstein lived in Vienna when Freud was developing psychoanalysis and was in contact with people who were either undergoing treatment or 'experimenting' with these new ideas. Wittgenstein himself had experience with hypnosis and interpretation of dreams, and he was familiar with most of Freud's works, e.g. *Interpretation of Dreams*, and influences, e.g. Breuer. According to Rush Rhees, Wittgenstein called himself a 'disciple or follower of Freud', but this claim seems not to have shielded Freud from the strong criticisms that Wittgenstein made of Freud's psychoanalysis. But before dealing with Wittgenstein's criticism of Freudian psychoanalysis I must provide a very brief account of Freud's views.

Freud claimed that there are two innate forces or instincts behind human behaviour, namely Eros and Thanatos – Eros

is the life instinct whose main component is life force and sexual drive, whilst Thanatos is the death instinct whose main drive is aggression towards ourselves or/and others. Freud believed that both Eros and Thanatos make up the 'Id', which is the first part of personality to develop. The newborn baby has no concept of the outside world, and its personality operates solely on those instincts of life and death, i.e. those urges in the unconscious mind to satisfy desires and survival needs. As the outside world is experienced, the 'Ego' develops, which is the conscious part of the child's personality. The Ego allows the child to distinguish reality and realise that one needs to behave in a reasonable manner to satisfy those urges of the Id. The Ego is rational and logical. At the age of three the child develops the third component of its personality, that is, the 'Superego'. Freud believed that the Superego was divided into two parts, namely 'Conscience' and 'Ego Ideal'. Conscience tells us what we should not do, and the Ego Ideal tells us what we should do. Freud's theory of psychoanalysis was developed from his views on human psychological development and it has as its cornerstone the hypothesis of the *unconscious*, as it claims that those urges of life and death in the unconscious have much to answer for with regards to 'mental problems'. In order to deal with the unconscious Freud developed his psychoanalytic methodology which is based on free-association (i.e. patients are asked to say the first thing that comes into their minds in response to words such as 'happiness', 'love', 'fear', etc.), hypnotism and analysis of dreams. Freud's ideas represented a revolution in modern thinking and this is the reason he is considered the 'father of psychoanalysis'.

Let me now turn to Wittgenstein. Part of Wittgenstein's fame in modern times is due to the fact that he claimed to have found a therapeutic process analogous to psychoanalysis. This therapeutic process was very often referred to as 'Therapeutic Positivism' in the years just after the Second World War. McGuinness (1992, p. 39) notes that the use of the word positivism is most unfortunate for the original positivists argued that all thinking should follow the patterns used by the sciences, whilst Wittgenstein tried to show that there are areas of human knowledge which are not accessible through a scientific pathway – Wittgenstein's main aim was to clarify matters rather than to achieve progress. Wittgenstein's Therapeutic Positivism or Philosophical Method is based on his Theory of Meaning, which says that the meaning of a word is never completely given, i.e. there is always an uncovered facet to the meaning of a word because the meaning of a word is linked to its usage. In the same way, for Wittgenstein, the meaning of a dream depends upon *how* the dream is recalled or reported by the subject - a subject's choice and use of words influences the meaning of a dream, which is not given all at once but is something that unfolds during the course of a narrative (McGuinness 1992, p. 40). Wittgenstein also understands that there is nothing hidden in a dream, everything in a dream is in principle accessible to the dreamer who already knows everything he needs to know about the dream ((Bouveresse, 1995, p. 9). Wittgenstein says:

When a dream is interpreted we might say that it is fitted into a context in which it ceases to be puzzling... It is as though we were presented with a bit of canvas on which were painted a hand and a part of a face

and certain other shapes, arranged in a puzzling and incongruous manner. Suppose this bit is surrounded by considerable stretches of blank canvas, and that we now paint in forms – say an arm, a trunk, etc – leading up to and fitting on to the shapes on the original bit; and that the result is that we say: Ah, now I see why it is like that... (Wittgenstein, 1966, pp. 45-46)

As such Wittgenstein disagreed with Freud's views on interpretation of dreams. For Freud dreams are things to be perused - Freud is after the very essence of dreams. Freud scrutinises every aspect of the dream in search of symbolisms, and as such these aspects are like 'natural kinds' for there is a hidden structure to them, which needs to be uncovered. Wittgenstein maintained that Freud's views on interpretation of dreams were utterly mistaken. He says: 'Freud mentions various symbols: top hats are regularly phallic symbols, wooden tables are women, etc. His historical explanation of this symbols is absurd... Consider the difficulty that if a symbol in a dream is not understood, it does not seem to be a symbol at all. So why call it one?' (Wittgenstein, 1966, pp. 43-44).

Moreover, McGuinness (1992:32) notes that Wittgenstein also criticised the fact that Freud seems to argue sometimes that the right interpretation of dreams is the one provided by the analyst and, at other times, that the right interpretation is the one which favours the best outcome for the patient. For Wittgenstein this is unacceptable because there seems to be a lack of criteria for the employment of procedures as it seems that the causal connection between one's life and one's dreams are made at random: 'What is intriguing about a dream is not its causal connection with events in my life etc. But rather that it functions as part of a story the remainder of which is in the dark' (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 69).

Thus, how does one chooses which procedure is the correct one – the one which the analyst provides or the one which favours the best treatment outcome for the patient? In defence of Freud, it could be said that the process of psychoanalysis is a binary relation between analyst and patient, and therefore it could be argued that the right interpretation is (1) the one which best works out between analyst and patient, and (2) provides 'the best therapeutic outcome'. In this case, the right interpretation is the one which means something to the patient, it is the one that the patient either accepts or rejects, and not the one to which a patient is ambivalent. But this defence is not entirely convincing either - the expression 'the best therapeutic outcome' is too ambiguous. Does it mean 'curing the patient', such as 'curing the stammer', or does it mean that the patient 'feels happier', such as a stammer that does not distress the patient any longer?

Wittgenstein also criticised Freud's use of the technique of 'free-association' because it is all-embracing, that is, everything has an explanation and is significant. If one applies this technique in a sort of chain-like procedure, one always reaches a certain point where things 'make sense'. Wittgenstein says 'But this procedure of free association and so on is so queer, because Freud never shows how we know where to stop – where is the right solution' (Wittgenstein, 1966, p.42). The last criticism raised by Wittgenstein against Freudian psychoanalysis is that it is a sort of mythology. That

is, Freudian psychoanalysis satisfies patients by providing explanations, which makes patient's lives 'easier', just as mythology did in the past or still does in some parts of the world today, but that it cannot crucially provide any 'hardcore' reasons for its procedures. He says: 'Analysis is likely to do harm. Because although one may discover in the course of it various things about oneself, one must have a very strong...criticism in order to recognise and see through the mythology that is offered or imposed to one. A powerful mythology' (Wittgenstein, 1966, pp. 51-52).

It is true that Freud made use of Greek mythology to understand certain psychological conditions. A classical instance of this is the so called Oedipus complex, where the child boy *unconsciously desires* his mother and *unconsciously wishes* his father dead; conversely, in the Electra complex the child girl *unconsciously desires* her father and *unconsciously wishes* her mother dead – both psychological conditions were based upon the Greek myths of Oedipus and Electra.¹ But it is not in this respect that Wittgenstein claimed Freud's psychoanalysis a sort of mythology. Wittgenstein's criticism lies on the very methodology of the psychoanalytical process. Wittgenstein's point is that Freud makes use of interpretation of dreams and free-association to provide new meanings to events which would be normally seen as ordinary. For instance, Freud scrutinises a dream and suddenly a top hat acquires a whole new meaning; it is not a top hat any longer but something else – a phallus. In this way, Freud uses one event to create or induce another event with a whole new meaning. It is in this respect that Wittgenstein claims that Freud is offering the patient a sort of mythology - a mythology with no empirical foundation - that can provide the patient with some sort of relief to his emotional or psychological problems.

Certainly, Freudian psychoanalysis had a great impact in places such as the USA and Latin America, though Europe, and Britain in particular, remain by and large sceptical of any sort of psychoanalytical process. That said, psychoanalysis, Freudian or not, has provided a great number of people worldwide with some relief to their problems. But Wittgenstein's criticism cannot be entirely ignored and the charges that the methodology of psychoanalysis is somehow arbitrary, and that it is only a sort of mythology that is being offered to the patient, cannot be overlooked. These charges may present practitioners of practical philosophy with the opportunity to look closer at Wittgenstein's philosophical method. That is, instead of aiming at *solving* problems, aiming at *providing* answers, practitioners should explore a problem through *unravelling* misleading analogies and linguistic confusions so that eventually it is not a problem any longer, and as such it no longer troubles the patient. I dare to suggest here that this focus on clarifying misunderstanding and confusions, rather than solving problems, could even be used in the interpretation of dreams, which is a resource not used by Practical Philosophy practitioners. But the use of interpretations of dreams, I would say, should be used only within Wittgenstein's constraints, that is, only insofar as a dream is reported or recalled by a patient (i.e. his or

her choices of words will impinge on the meaning of the dream, and the meaning of the dream is something that unfolds during the course of the narrative). And as such, there is no need to enter into the process of uncovering any hidden meaning in dreams, as is the case in Freudian psychoanalysis.

References

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- Wittgenstein, L., (1980), *Culture and Value*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

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Announcement

Philosophical Counsellors' Discussion Group

Anyone who has been on the Society's Philosophical Counselling course is automatically invited to join a dedicated discussion group <http://groups.google.com/group/philosophical-counselling>. This is a useful place to post your own thoughts on Philosophical Counselling, discuss different approaches, ask questions and pick up on the ideas of others.

Editor

Request for Information

Philosophical Counselling in Norwegian Prisons

I am currently involved in group counselling sessions in prisons in Norway and have recently started individual philosophical counselling. I will be seeking funding for this project and am looking for evidence of previous research or experience in this area. If anyone has anything to share on this I would be most grateful. In Norway we have one philosopher, Marianne Walderhaug, who works as a Philosophical Counsellor in a prison near Bergen. Apart from her work this is a completely new direction in Norway.

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1 Recently a whole range of psychological conditions have been drawn from famous stories following on the Freudian tradition: Cinderella complex and Peter Pan syndrome are two examples.