

# Nietzsche and Freud

PHIL 375, UBC

Philosophy and Literature

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Many of the things that Freud said were pre-empted by Nietzsche, for example the idea of the subconscious. Both Freud and Nietzsche were thinkers who were trying to understand what an honest intellectual response to the historical phenomenon of modernity could look like. Modernity is where

*... the people have lost their ancient beliefs; the parson sits at home and unravels his vestments, one after another ... (Franz Kafka, A Country Doctor, 141)*

epistemological crisis “I was in great perplexity” (136)

the efficiency of aimlessness “you never know what you are going to find in your own house” (137)

the twinning of pathology and sex the boy's wound (141) Kafka's bisexuality? See Foucault's *History of Sexuality*

lack of agency first, the doctor cannot help because the boy is healthy; then he cannot help because the boy is past helping (141)

collapse of eschatology “it cannot be made good, not ever” (143)

# Ontogenesis vs. Phylogenesis

Another parallel between Nietzsche and Freud is that both were trying to do to the subject matter of explanation what Darwin did with respect to life: explain by revealing its history. The important difference for Freud is that he used **ontogenesis** instead of **phylogenesis** for his explanation (25). Here are some key concepts in psycho-analysis.

**drives** irrational drives determine human behaviour; rational explanations are epiphenomenal (confabulation)

**neurosis** conflict between the unconscious and the conscious creates repression

**subconscious** the wall between the unconscious and the conscious is porous, but information which passes through is encrypted in symbols (dreams, myths, jokes, Freudian slips)

**psycho-analysis** therapy is bringing-to-consciousness and transference (32)

**Oedipus Complex** early childhood amnesia obscures the Oedipus complex

**Id Ego Superego** the rational identity is confronted with an animalic identity and with a repressive identity (double object selection, separated by latency, 37) (for “id” see the groom in “A Country Doctor” (137), for “superego” see the priest in “The Trial”)

**sex** the explanatory power of sex (16), although sexual desire ultimately must be sublimated (19, 26) (and, sometimes, a cigar is just a cigar, 40)

# iClicker Question Eighteen

Choose from the following options. This item will be graded.

## iClicker Question

Which one of these infantile activities does Freud address at length?

- A   ▶ Bedwetting
- B   ▶ Sleepwalking
- C   ▶ Thumbsucking
- D   ▶ Pottytraining

# Highlights of Infantile Sexuality

- sexual innocence and exaggerated sexual desire (16)
- notice how Freud struggles to define abnormality (19, see his dam analogy on page 26)