



Wrestling with Destiny: The promise of psychoanalysis

Lucy Holmes

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Can psychoanalysis help people control their destinies?

Using empirical evidence from neuroscience, Lucy Holmes makes a powerful argument that it can. This book considers the various ways in which destiny is linked to the repetition compulsion, and how free association in psychoanalysis can literally change the mind in ways that can help people reshape and take control of the future. Freud's psychoanalysis is revealed here to be startlingly modern in its consonance with the latest findings in the study of the brain.

The compulsion to repeat can propel human beings toward destinies they would never have consciously chosen. The tenacity of this human tendency can inhibit our ability to meet life's challenges. These challenges include our gender; an inability to master the complexities of loving and the strains of marriage; fears regarding the impertinence of being successful; the unconscious, reptilian pleasure we derive from going to war and raping the planet; and the inexorable decline and decay of our mortal flesh.

This book argues that the evolved talking that occurs in the psychoanalytic process can change the chemistry and structure of the brain in a way that helps the talker face these challenges and take charge of his or her own destiny. The author presents a cogent hypothesis spanning brain and mind to clarify how the basic rule of psychoanalysis - "just say everything" - can actually cure. This will appeal to mental health professionals such as psychoanalysts and psychotherapists, and students at the post-graduate level, as well as the general interested reader.

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