

Psychoanalysis, culture and society: a postgraduate conference

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Abstracts

Anne Aiyegbusi (Middlesex)

“Useless, Worthless Rubbish”: Attachment, Projection and Identification in the Nurse- Patient Relationship with People Diagnosed with Personality Disorders

This study set out to gain clarity about the experiences of nurses working with people diagnosed with personality disorders from the perspective of the people involved. A sequential quantitative – qualitative mixed methods research design has been employed. A quantitative Delphi study provided an expert nursing consensus regarding key areas of clinical nursing process and practice required for managing the nurse – patient relationship with people diagnosed with personality disorders. The results of the Delphi were used to inform interview guides for in-depth qualitative interviews with nurses working in secure mental health and psychoanalytic therapeutic community settings and qualitative focus groups with patients diagnosed with personality disorders currently receiving care and treatment in those clinical settings. In-depth interviews and focus groups aimed to gain an understanding of the lived experience of the nurse-patient relationship from the perspective of nurses and patients. An additional aim was to establish what nursing processes and practices helped and which hindered effective management of the relationship.

Theoretically, phenomenological and psychoanalytic paradigms have been integrated to accommodate for the need to understand the experience of the nurse – patient relationship from conscious and unconscious perspectives.

The research process will be briefly described in this paper. Preliminary findings from analysis of the in-depth interviews with nurses will be presented. One particular theme will be explored. That is, the theme of how nurses experience feelings of being ‘useless, worthless, rubbish’ during their interpersonal work with people diagnosed with personality disorders. The unconscious processes supporting this phenomenon will also be explored.

Marcelle Bartolo-Abela (Middlesex)

Schizophrenia: Inadequacy of Current Clinical-Scientific Discourses and Emerging Conceptualizations

Schizophrenia is currently defined in the mainstream clinical-scientific discourse as a biological-genetic-neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by cognitive, neuroanatomical, neuromotor, and psychophysiological abnormalities of genetic origin, potentiated by environmental and familial stress, resulting in severe impairments across all domains of individual functioning. Based on this hypothesis,

first-line treatments within current mainstream standards of care are primarily biological/psychopharmacological, with supportive psychotherapy as secondary. Psychoanalytical or psychodynamic psychotherapy are considered contraindicated if not actually harmful. Second-line treatment includes electroconvulsive therapy. However, data emerging from Davoine & Gaudilliere's (2004) longitudinal clinical psychoanalytical research with clients affected by schizophrenia, my clinical experience as a psychotherapist with clients having schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder in the United States, and my current research-in-progress manifest that an alternate, emerging conceptualization may be more accurate. Specifically, the conceptualization of schizophrenia as unconscious individual embodiment, re-enactment, and re-presentation of the unconscious knowledge of very severe trauma resultant from societal violence that had been foreclosed from the sanctioned societal discourse – trauma beyond trauma/s currently conceptualized within the clinical mainstream – may be a more accurate representation of the nature and function of schizophrenia than the biological-genetic-neurodevelopmental hypothesis. In this presentation I outline the evidence showing that the genesis of schizophrenia may be societal in nature rather than biological-genetic-neurodevelopmental, with the function of the affected individual being that of a liminal container for, symbolic witness to, and representation of society's ongoing denial, disavowal, and foreclosure of its aggressiveness and violence. This emerging conceptualization may also result in the development of preventive interventions targeted primarily at the society that is the perpetrator of the violence in the first instance, rather than remedially, overwhelmingly, and at times solely at the multiply injured recipient of its violence.

Diana Caine (Middlesex & National Hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery, London)

Compulsive behaviour in dementia and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

Repetition is a recurring theme in Freud's oeuvre, from the obsessional acts of the 'Rat man', to repetition in the transference to the re-playing of trauma in dream in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. The fact that it does recur in these very diverse situations, suggests the need for different kinds of interpretation in different contexts.

Repetitive compulsive behaviours are a prominent feature in both the psychiatric condition of Obsessive-Compulsive disorder (OCD, or obsessional neurosis) and the neurodegenerative condition of Pick's disease, or fronto-temporal dementia (FTD). Although the patients' behaviours in the two conditions can look quite similar, examination of the cognitive and psychical context in which they occur discloses differences that are easily elided in virtue of the surface likeness. Taking the view that different contexts for repetition require different kinds of readings, the principal aim of this paper, in elucidating the differences between repetition compulsion as it occurs in these two disorders, is to offer a neuro-psychoanalytic account of compulsive behaviour in dementia.

This paper will argue that the disruption to what psychologists call 'cognitive processes' in dementia can be viewed as a disruption to psychoanalytic 'secondary processes' – the capacity for coherent, logical, rational thinking. Further, that the cognitive 'impairment' is tantamount to a return to an earlier cognitive developmental

stage, a stage prior to the acquisition of coherent, verbally-mediated, rational thinking; and that this cognitive regression precipitates regression, not as a defence but as a consequence, to an earlier psychical developmental stage. Like infants, FTD patients seek the repetition of pleasure, each time exactly like the last, ad infinitum. This cognitive and psychical regression can then be seen as the absolute converse of the heightened sense of guilt and responsibility that accompanies doubt and anxiety in obsessional neurosis.

Susan Carden (Glasgow School of Art)

How Design Can Relate To Art Within Psychoanalysis

The aim of this paper is to use interventions to locate graphic design and art in relation to knowledge. The roles of the signifier, signified and referent, when used within communication design, are central to the function of a graphic designer, but how do they relate to artistic practice? By using Jacques Rancière's definitions of artistic interventions, and combining these with specific relationships are outlined by Louis Althusser, Alain Badiou and Jacques Lacan, this piece proposes a schema to locate design, in particular graphic design, within a context that also separates it from artistic practice. When Badiou situates the subject as removed from knowledge, with chance located between them, he echoes Michael Polanyi's observation that the descriptive nature of language clouds the possibilities for using communication as a method for relaying information. As Lacanian precepts are incorporated, it is possible to connect being and the subject in relation to the void by the big Other. Although artistic practice and graphic design can represent the same thing in different ways, their contextual differences can be shown to reside on adjacent sides of the big Other, equidistant from the subject. The outlined schema also shows visibility as the pivotal point between science and artistic practice, which both divides and separates the relationship that exists between graphic design and art.

Lara Cox (Exeter)

Comedy in Unexpected Places: Ionesco's *La Cantatrice Chauve* and the Perverse Mode of Spectatorship

When Eugène Ionesco wrote his play *La Cantatrice Chauve*, dubbed by critics the paragon of the Theatre of the Absurd, he considered that he had formulated a 'tragedy of language'. To his surprise, the play drew laughter from its audiences. The piece continues to provoke laughter even today, in its current setting of Théâtre de la Huchette in Paris.

This paper proposes to bridge the gap between authorial expectations and actual spectatorial response, by drawing from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as a body of knowledge. I read *La Cantatrice Chauve* alongside current psychoanalytic attitudes towards comedy, taking as a point of departure Alenka Zupancic's *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (2008). I expand upon two notions proposed by Zupancic: firstly, the link between analytic transference and comedy; secondly, the distinction that she makes between 'true' and 'false' comedies.

In this paper, I posit that the spectator is encouraged into a 'perverse' mode of transference in watching *La Cantatrice Chauve*, and it is for this reason that the play becomes a comedy. Although not explicitly stated by Zupancic, I draw out the similarities between her theses on comedy (particularly in terms of the phallus, castration and the drive) and Lacan's theory of the perverse structure. I suggest that the derision of language in *La Cantatrice Chauve* guides the spectator into a perverse modality of spectatorship by showing up the Symbolic father as confined to a phallogocentric artifice. The spectator avoids the anxiety-inducing realisation of the lack in the Other, by papering over it with the all-encompassing imaginary phallus which stirs up laughter.

I conclude by determining where *La Cantatrice Chauve* sits in terms of Zupancic's definitions of subversive 'true' comedies that pushes the bounds of dominant ideology or and 'false' comedies that reinforce the spectator's relationship with the Symbolic.

Parisa Dashtipour (LSE)

Swedish Language and the objet a: Gringo Magazine's 'Threat' to Swedishness

This paper discusses some of the impact of the Swedish self-claimed anti-racist magazine called Gringo on the Swedish public sphere. Gringo was published as a supplement in the Swedish Metro between 2004 and 2007 and its aim was to resist the negative representations of the 'immigrant' in the mainstream media and hence re-evaluate blatte (an offensive name referring to those with immigration background) and renegotiate Swedishness. The magazine was an unusual example of a minority/integration media which was accessed by important public figures and which was involved in public political debates. Gringo's content trespasses prohibitions, both linguistic and cultural, and ridicules and criticises established power. These issues are brought up in a language permeated by obscenity, humour and slang; a language which would be categorised as 'blatte-Swedish' and which would ordinarily be considered offensive and improper in public discourse. Gringo was both praised and resisted in the Swedish society. The aim of this paper is to investigate the resistance against this magazine and show how the negative reactions against Gringo's transgression of the Swedish language can be understood using Lacanian notions of fantasy, objet a and jouissance. The reactions reveal a fantasy in which the Swedish language is alluded to as the objet a, that precious Thing which promises jouissance and which holds a national community together. In this fantasy, Gringo is the culprit which contaminates the Swedish language with its own intolerable jouissance.

Catrin Edwards (Reading)

Ambiguity and ‘Wild Psychoanalysis’: Reporting and responding to clinical material in the Psychoanalytic Literature

In this paper I consider the functioning of ‘ambiguity’ for psychoanalysis and its relation to the way in which the psychoanalytic community debate, often heatedly, over the meaning of a symptom reported in clinical material as either being definitively correct or not.

I analyse Freud’s paper on “‘Wild’ Psychoanalysis” for its implications with regard to the ambiguity inherent in any analyst’s meaning. For Freud, the psychoanalyst “is never in a position to discover the whole truth” – the truth for psychoanalysis is then partial and characterised by lack – and it is a fundamental part of what is known as psychoanalytic “tact” to maintain this position of indeterminacy in relation to meaning (Freud 1910). The ‘wild’ analyst, on the other hand, does not interpret in a way that maintains this ambiguity but, rather, produces a stable and un-ambiguous meaning for the patient’s symptom.

In light of this reading of ambiguity as fundamental to psychoanalysis, I am interested in the implications of analysts responding to other analyst’s interpretations (presented in clinical material) and the relation this has to meaning being produced in the psychoanalytic literature as potentially un-ambiguous and, therefore, at odds with psychoanalytic principles. Patrick Casement’s report of the treatment of Mrs B in *Learning from the Patient* is one example of a text that has produced a heated response over the interpretation of meaning. As such, I analyse Casement’s “A Retrospective Overview”, his response to the many responders to his original case history, which claims to be a definitive and ultimate account of the meaning of Mrs B’s case through its elimination of the ambiguity that characterised the original report. I analyse the text’s claims focussing on a “wild analysis” (Casement 2000) constructed in relation to *ambiguity* in opposition to the *unambiguous* ‘wild psychoanalysis’ I read in Freud’s text.

Paul Ford (Essex)

Dimorphic Containment Agency

My paper shall argue, from an object relations perspective, for a dimorphic model of the mind that unifies and remedies monomorphic models advanced by Freud and Bion. My model of the mind has been created as a more complete model of the mind than Freud and Bion developed and is thereby of help to clinicians.

I am focusing on Bion’s containment model and on its implications for Freud’s structural model. Bion’s model is implicitly gendered, comprising only a maternal container, and, engaging with this unisexual and monomorphic notion, I create a notion of a dimorphic container that supplements the maternal container with a paternal container based on Freud’s *Über-ich*.

This manoeuvre also remedies Freud’s structural model, which is also implicitly gendered in comprising only a paternal agency in the form of *das Über-ich*: engaging with this unisexual and monomorphic agency, I create a notion of a dimorphic agency

in which the paternal *Über-ich* is supplemented by a maternal *Unter-ich* based on Bion's maternal container. I demonstrate this model by using spatial imagery, the paternal form dominating aggression from above and the maternal form supporting distress from below.

By unifying Bion's containment model and Freud's structural model, I create a notion of dimorphic containment agency, the maternal container or *Unter-ich* and the paternal container or *Über-ich* comprising the bisexual polarities that forge this dimorphism, and, as such, I reinforce Freudian notions of bisexuality that I believe both Freud and Bion lost sight of in creating their models of the mind.

Barry Geoghegan (Middlesex)

A Critical Examination of the Use of Psychoanalysis in Political Profiling

Walter Langer's wartime psychoanalytic biography of Adolf Hitler, conducted for the American 'Office of Strategic Services' forerunner of the CIA, is regarded as the seminal work in the field of psychological profiling. Inspired by this study, psychiatrist Jerrold Post founded and directed for some twenty years the CIA's profiling unit, the "Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior". This paper will reassess the merits of Langer's original analysis and examine how Post has developed the technique in respect of later developments in psychoanalysis. It will be argued that whilst such 'at a distance' psychobiographies are useful heuristic devices, reliance on them to make individual predictions is somewhat problematic. Because psychobiographies in general have a tendency towards 'confirmatory bias', psychological profiles are inherently geared towards retrodiction, rather than prediction.

Although it is not known what wartime use was made of Langer's profile of Hitler, Post's own profiles have been extremely influential. Post was personally cited by President Jimmy Carter as being crucial to the success of the Camp David Accords of 1978, and reputedly the psychological profile of Saddam Hussein that Post presented to members of Congress in 1990, was what convinced previously reluctant legislators to support the Gulf War. As an international expert on terrorism, Post's views are widely disseminated including to the United Nations and NATO, and his profile of Osama bin Laden has had considerable popular impact in the United States. Nevertheless, psychological profiling remains controversial, so that this paper will examine not only the utility of such profiles, but the tension between their popular and political influence, and the constraints of academic rigour and clinical ethics.

Jessica Gildersleeve (Bristol)

Death Sleep: Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart*

Elizabeth Bowen's novel, *The Death of the Heart* (1938), may be read as a study of sleep as a psychophysiological response to trauma; an exploration, in form and in content, of 'atrophy, not of death so much as of death sleep.' In this novel, 'death sleep' becomes a typically strange and Bowenesque metaphor for anaesthetising oneself to the past. This text suggests that to allow a part of the self to atrophy, to become numb, to go to sleep, is the only way can go on living after trauma, so that its concern with sleep, with death, and with dream (the 'guardian of sleep') is tied to the treatment of traumatic memory. Atrophy, in this text, comes to imply an inability to cope with the traumatic event and integrate it into conscious thought. In this novel, death sleep might be seen to signify a site of unknowability, a blind spot not dissimilar to the scar of traumatic memory; in addition, it draws on the idea of liminality, suggesting a hypnagogic 'nowhere' space hovering between the mind asleep and awake. Drawing on work by Cathy Caruth and by Jacqueline Rose, in relation to Sigmund Freud's work on dreams, sleep, and awakening, this paper will unpack the dream-work of *The Death of the Heart* in order to show how this might extend theories about the unconscious, and contributes to the ways in which we might think about memory, and in particular, the memory of trauma.

Miriam Isaac (Leicester & Worcester)

Class Dynamics: A Relational Approach

Class is a neglected area of enquiry in counselling and psychotherapy. Gender, 'race', sexuality and other aspects of diversity have attracted and continue to attract considerable attention in terms of the politics of the therapeutic relationship. This work theorises class as a political, problematic and fruitful therapeutic construct.

This presentation starts by providing a brief analysis of why class as a concept has remained unacknowledged as a legitimate concern to the psychotherapeutic community. It then draws on classical social theory in the form of Marx's materialist analysis of social action in and on the world, and object relations theory in the form of Klein's internalisation or inner object relating, to construct a relational notion of class. The latter is offered as providing an analytical basis for locating class and its effects within the therapeutic relationship as opposed to seeing class as externally associated with individual class position, equal opportunities, action and meaning. The argument concludes that a relational notion of class has import for the transference and counter-transference and the experience of difference within the therapeutic dyad.

This presentation would be most appropriate for anyone interested in theory, the connections between theory and practice and those who wish to challenge the apolitical stance of past theorising and work effectively with difference.

Celia Jameson (Goldsmiths)

The Stockholm syndrome, psychoanalysis and intersubjectivity

The Stockholm syndrome has been cited in recent media coverage of the kidnapping of Clara Rojas and Ingrid Betancourt in Columbia, the kidnapping and imprisonment in a cellar of Natascha Kampusch, and Elisabeth Fritzl, the Austrian woman held prisoner with her children in a cellar for twenty-four years by her father. The term refers to an apparently anomalous bond of love or friendship between an aggressor and their victim, which is understood as a pathological return to a state of infantile dependence. It has subsequently been used by a group of feminist psychologists in order to explain why some women do not leave, and indeed keep loving, the men who abuse them (Graham et al 1994). The Stockholm syndrome model has also fed into contemporary models of the “abusive relationship”, which is disseminated through popular psychology and self-help literature.

It has been argued that the autonomous subject emerges in psychoanalytic theory through the model of the Oedipal phase, through which the subject’s move towards autonomy is instigated through identification with the father, and dependence on the mother is positioned as a threat to this autonomy (Benjamin, 1988:133-4). Lynne Layton points out that although there is a tendency to ‘pathologise dependence and vulnerability’ psychoanalysis is divided as to the desirability of infantile dependence, regarding the development of loving relationships with others as both the ground of subjectivity and as problematic to the autonomy of the subject (Layton, 2008 p.63). This paper explores how questions of dependence on the other and regression to an infantile state are played out through the Stockholm syndrome. I argue that “relational turn” (Clarke, 2008) within psychoanalysis offers the possibility of rethinking intersubjective encounter without pathologising dependence (Baraitser 2009, Benjamin, 1988, Layton, 2008).

Girish Jivaji (Birkbeck)

Psychoanalysis and the possibility of ethnography

I have been conducting a research project focussed on the practice of mathematics education in secondary schooling. This paper is concerned with the use of psychoanalytic ideas within such research, specifically the practices of participant observation and ethnography. It addresses two broad questions that arise in this conjunction of psychoanalysis and ethnography: firstly, the position of the researcher as one who knows and wishes to know; and secondly, the nature of reality and the possibility of its observation and experience. This paper approaches these questions from within a broadly Lacanian perspective.

Within this perspective, the desire to be an analyst, one who knows, is regarded as a symptom and therefore requires analysis much like any other symptom. In this regard the position of the researcher and their relation to knowledge could be placed within the enterprise of knowledge production; that is, the desire to know and the data produced should be thought together, or rather against one another, within the micro-processes of embodied involvement that is classroom based participant observation.

Psychoanalysis seems to assert that one thinks with or through one’s body, this relation of the thinking body to reality troubles ideas of transparent visual observation

of an already existing outside. Lacan distinguishes between ‘reality’ - the realm of visual observation structured by one’s *Imaginary* relation to a position within the *Symbolic* order; and ‘effective reality’ - a realm of bodily thought that speaks to that which remains in the margins of one’s awareness. These margins of thought insist on disrupting or disturbing that which seems evident.

I would like to present some data and analysis that attempts to deal with this tension between observation and that which disrupts it, together with how one may render moments of ‘effective reality’ within the classroom.

Philippa Kaina (UCL)

Formative Fantasies: Edgar Degas’ *Alexander and Bucephalus*

The subject of this paper is an early painting by Edgar Degas entitled *Alexander and Bucephalus*. Its subject refers to a passage from Plutarch’s ‘Life of Alexander’ which describes how a young Alexander the Great confounded his father King Philip of Macedon by taming a wild horse named Bucephalus.

While this obscure picture may have little to recommend it aesthetically, my paper will consider what the work has to tell about Degas’ subjectivity during this formative phase of his artistic career – a moment when he had yet to gain critical recognition or commercial success. Degas’ inability to establish himself professionally during the 1860s was a cause of much anxiety for Edgar’s father and financial patron Auguste De Gas who had begun to express grave concerns with regard to his thirty-year old son’s creative efficacy.

With this in mind, I seek to demonstrate how the standoff between Alexander and Philip staged in *Alexander and Bucephalus* might productively be read as a tangential reflection on the strained relations between *père et fils* Degas at this moment. By unraveling the complex familial politics inscribed in this picture with reference to the Freudian paradigm of the ‘family romance’, this paper reveals how Plutarch’s account of the ambitious young Alexander represented something of deep personal significance to Degas at the beginning of his artistic career. While the artist had not yet been able to vindicate the doubts of his skeptical elders in the same way that Alexander had succeeded to do, Plutarch’s portrait of this radiant young prince functioned as a highly cathected identificatory site in which Degas located his own, as yet unrealized, artistic potential. At this precarious moment of his career it was through such an aspirational identification that Degas was able to hold the strength of his convictions in the face of *his* dubious elders and maintain the possibility of one day realizing his own desire for professional renown and success.

Vasileios Kantas (University of the Arts)

Between the snapshot and the staged: Disavowal in factitious photographs

This paper examines the process of reading factitious photographs, namely images that have been created in such a way, that they oscillate between the documentary and the constructed. The onlooker of such photographs finds himself being split between the modes of “this-could-have-happened” and “this-couldn’t-have-happened”. I’ll argue that there are similarities between the viewer of these images and the fetishist. What characterizes their mental state, is the activation of the defense mechanism of disavowal. By drawing examples out of the work of several artists that engage with quasi-documentary photography, as for example Jeff Wall and Philip Lorca Di Corcia, I will show how their directorial strategies produce ambivalent readings, leading the spectator into a state of perceptual multistability. In order to understand how the onlooker perceives such imagery, I will refer to some key-points of visual perception, to how a spectator makes meaning while confronting a photographic image, to the apparent realism of photographs, to the inherent belief in the photographic medium and to the notion of fetishism.

Elisavet Kalpaxi (Goldsmiths)

Self-portraiture and Narcissism

The relation between self-portraiture and narcissism is stressed throughout western art theory. From the 1970s onwards it refers mainly to revisions and amplifications of aspects of psychoanalytic theories on narcissism (mainly Freud’s and Lacan’s) blended with the 70’s notion of ‘cultural narcissism’.

Through psychoanalysis self-portraiture can be considered an agent of narcissism, and the reproduction and, therefore, objectification of one’s image as inherently linked to self-representative interests. However, this assumption is not always justified by the artworks themselves. The motives and intentions behind the creation of self-portraits are diverse: some self-portraits imitate the works of preceding important artists; some are explicitly made for self-promotion; some are commissioned by collectors who determine the subject matter. The self-portrait results from a number of conscious decisions, and is a medium for social recognition and publicity: a phenomenon linked to artist’s positioning within a social and professional context. Furthermore, some self-portraits do not indicate psychological closure; they rather reveal an intentional openness to the viewer who can assess identities or narrativize their contents. This idea clashes with the objectives of narcissism.

Psychoanalysis provides a method for employing the mechanisms of the human psyche in order to study social behaviour and the power that social norms and mores exercise on the individual. Apart from a ‘shielding façade’ of narcissism, in fact, the image of one’s body in self-portraiture can also be seen as a symbolic representation of the narcissism-conscience antagonism within the subject. Through the narcissism-conscience antagonism the reasons many artists kept their self-portraits private, the absence of self-portraiture from western art until the Renaissance and the negative associations regarding self-portraiture can be legitimized, as the self-centredness and auto-referentiality implied by self-portraiture comes into conflict with the decentring required in culture. Through the framework provided by psychoanalysis, I suggest that the more a work looks outwards to the viewer the less narcissistic it is.

Kevin Lu (Essex & Heythrop)

Adumbrations of a Jungian Psychohistory

Psychohistory has been dominated by a Freudian hermeneutic. A Jungian approach to the subject, alternatively, remains relatively unexplored. The aim of this paper is to critically assess some of Jung's thoughts on history.

Jung was consistently inconsistent, especially regarding his analysis of the role history plays in the development of the individual and collective respectively (compare [CW13.63] with [CW6.231-32]). He possesses, further, a unique understanding of history, distinguishing between two different types. First, history is viewed as an outmoded barrier hindering greater self-knowledge. This form of history, which Jung calls *objective history* (CW10.12), is a creation of the conscious mind. The second form of history – to which he attributes greater value – springs from the unconscious. Ultimately, the structures of historical events are “long prepared” in the unconscious (CW10.315; CW8.594). Historical instances are simply vehicles for the expression of the unconscious position compensating consciousness. Jung calls this second manifestation *natural history* (CW10.12). I suggest that *conscious history* and *archetypal history* are more appropriate terms to distinguish between the two types of history discerned by Jung. I argue, moreover, that his theory of archetypes – underpinning his assumption of the existence of a ‘greater’ form of history beyond *conscious history* – is central to preventing historians from utilizing Jungian concepts. Determining what Jung actually thought about history and critically examining the implications of his statements are crucial to:

- a) understanding how a Jungian psychohistory would look and operate when applied to concrete, historical instances and primary sources; and
- b) pinpointing the modifications that will need to be made if the application of Jungian psychology is to add value to our understanding of both the past and the historian's craft.

This analysis of Jung's work is by no means exhaustive, but a first attempt to systematically organize and evaluate Jung's historical thinking.

Paul McGee (Exeter)

The unbearable weight of New Labour: A psychoanalytic look at New Labour social policy since 1997

With their landslide victory in the 1997 British General Election, New Labour promised to put the ‘consumer’ at the heart of their ambition plans for public service reform. To do this, New Labour drew on many of the theoretical conclusions made by ‘rationalist’ approaches to social science, notably concerning how one thinks about the subject as a consumer. The assumptions and following deductions made by this field paints the subject as being calculating, self-interested and loaded with idiosyncratic preferences. However, using the theory of the French Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, these assumptions that aim to empower the freedom of the individual within the public services in fact work to create a regime that instead of allowing a

pre-discursive subjectivity to emerge and work for the greater good instead functions to create that subjectivity and punishes those who 'fail to be themselves'. At the heart of New Labour's commitment to freedom, diversity and empowerment lays a 'counter-discourse' that aims to codify and structure human behaviour into a strict ideological platform, hidden by their commitment to 'evidence-based policy' and 'social facts'.

Robbie McLaughlan (Glasgow)

The little wolf: the 'troubling presence of madness' in *à la recherche du temps perdu*.

This paper will re-examine popular critical perceptions of *la recherche* as the Oedipal text *par excellence*. The now infamous questionnaire in which Proust was asked 'What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?', and his response, 'To be separated from Mama,' has been used as the starting point for a series of Oedipal readings of the novel. Freudian critics have gained immense mileage from the narrator's childish need for a goodnight kiss from his mother, with her refusal being used to explain the intense jealousy that characterises his adult relationships. This paper will argue that such reductive readings of Proust restrict the novel, by failing to acknowledge the multiplicities of multiplicities that exist within the text. Proust's novel is thus not a stable entity upon which a fixed Freudian language can be applied but exists in a constant state of flux.

My argument follows Gilles Deleuze in championing Proust's novel as an example of the anoedipal text which, 'places an explosive device in its package, fabricating a counterfeit currency, causing the superego and its form of expression to explode, as well as the market value of its form of content.' (*A-O*, p. 133-34) According to Deleuze, Freud identified the schizo as the enemy, simply because he resists all approaches to being oedipalised. The paper will expand upon comments made by Deleuze during a roundtable on Proust to demonstrate how *la recherche* is a schizo text – schizophrenia being a creative process of thinking differently: of becoming - but my paper will not merely be a Deleuzean reading of the novel, for I further argue, via Michel Foucault, for a consideration of the schizo text as one which forces together the languages of literature and madness.

Yuval Moshkovitz (Birkbeck)

Nationalism and its function within the psychological structure in times of international conflict

Modern and post modern theories of Nationalism regard it as a socio-political phenomenon referring to an array of political, socio-economic (e.g. Gellner, 1983 Anderson 1983) or socio-linguistic (Billig 1995) factors to account for its emergence and sustainability in contemporary global reality. These theories fail to address the strong emotionality and apparent irrationality that this social phenomenon is charged with.

Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, refrains traditionally from systematic engagement with socio-cultural phenomena and while its concepts should be applied with care, it is indispensable in accounting for these psychological manifestations (as presented in Freud, 1921 and Bion 1961). Nationalism could be regarded as a psychosocial phenomenon where social conditions and forces merge with strong psychological attachments to a collective. National identification reflects the fundamental social nature of humans and could be considered as an integral part of the mental structure and its dynamics.

This paper explores the ways nationalism may function as a mental container, offering self-validation and meaning, while at other times it constitutes a defensive refuge from basic anxiety. The contemporary blurring of political, social and psychological boundaries intensified by globalization fractures this containing function leading to heightened individual and collective anxiety. This is dealt with through exclusion, rigid boundaries and paranoid group psychology as described in Bion's 'basic assumptions'. During an acute international conflict regressive individual-group 'parasitic relations' take over, restricting individual subjectivity and capacity to think. The national group's unconscious narratives are introduced as absolute truths and are echoed in group members' discourses.

I explore these extreme psychical conditions and ways in which individuals handle them through reactions of Israeli citizens to the December 2008 Israeli-Palestinian war in Gaza generated from talkbacks and interviews.

Ruth O'Donnell (Royal Holloway)

'In the kingdom of the blind, the one eyed man is king': Tom Cruise and oedipal trauma in Minority Report

Freud's presentation of the Oedipus complex in *The Interpretation of Dreams*¹ revealed his seminal findings on the psychosexual development of the male child. Sophocles's work *Oedipus Rex* dramatises the unconscious feelings of sexual rivalry the young boy feels towards his father in the pursuit of the affections of his mother. The figure of King Laius is further explored in the work of George Devereux, who suggests it is the violence of Laius which provokes Oedipus to commit patricide and that the Oedipus complex is largely a consequence of the 'child's sensitiveness towards the parents' sexual and aggressive impulses' with homosexual conflicts playing an important, and mostly overlooked, part in the workings of the complex.²

The homosexual conflict experienced by the son at an unconscious level provides a helpful starting point in the exploration of the star persona of Tom Cruise. Star theory argues that the film star embodies a set of defining characteristics that can be mapped across a body of work and which connect to culturally critical themes. Cruise is determined by his persona to play the son to the father, a formative Peter Pan who struggles to assert himself against patriarchal rule. Instead, his films are populated by sons who suffer at the hands of tyrannical father figures. His conflict against the father is provoked by the patriarch's rage.

An exploration of the Cruise persona's embodiment of Oedipal concerns will be developed by an analysis of the mise-en-scene of key films and the appropriate application of relevant theoretical texts. A case study of *Minority Report* (Spielberg, 20th Century Fox, 2000) will investigate the homosexual conflict of father and son on a narrative and visual level, looking in detail at the extensive use of castration motifs, such as those of impaired vision and blindness.

Constantin Preda (Goldsmiths)

The impact of psychoanalysis on notion of subjectivity

Psychoanalysis brought into attention the unseen forces that affect behavior, and the twentieth-century Occidental human subject is still a mixture of the Cartesian 'I' think; the Freudian 'I' dream, the Hegelian 'I' relate and the Lacanian 'I' speak. Nevertheless, Freud's asserted that psychoanalysis would revolutionize the concept of subjectivity, and how this was used to illuminate various disciplines like politics, epistemology, philosophy and art can only testify for its importance. His 'Copernican' revolution challenged the view of an independent consciousness and brought into attention the true psychological reality, the unconscious. Lacan, on the other hand, linked the development of the subject with cultural constructs, liberating the Freudian subject from a naturalistic paradigm and thus revitalizing psychoanalysis, by drawing it near to the modern paradigms of academia. This paper focuses on the conception of subjectivity in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, tracing back the heritage of psychoanalytical ideas to key issues in philosophy and epistemology.

Hephzibah Rendle-Short (Royal College of Art)

The diagram(me) of the lost object

The proposition explored by this paper is that a distinction can be made between 'diagram' as a graphic form and 'diagram' as an organising principle when examined through the matrix of Jacques Lacan's three registers, the real, the symbolic and the imaginary.

This paper forms part of a larger practice-based research that aims to test out the claim Freud makes in his paper, *Negation*, that in observing a thing I exercise the function of judgement by *re-finding* it: to ascertain the reality of something, is to measure an object in reality against the hallucination already in my mind.

To test out Freud's claim I am reconstructing the house of my childhood. It is precisely the gap between reality (the house that no longer exists) and the phantasy (the hallucination in my mind) that my work is interrogating as I build the house as archive, through such methods as text, photography, diagram and painting to make a new reality. The diagram is central both as a graphic form and as an organising principle.

For this paper I will take as my starting point Gaston Bachelard's idea that the house of our childhood is a diagram through which we experience every subsequent house.

In this paper I will investigate the proposition both through examples in my own practice, showing some of the methods I have employed to generate work, and by reflecting on certain examples from other fields.

Cathy Rosario (Goldsmiths)

The Unconscious Merchant of Venice

In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* pre-modern myth jars curiously with gritty, psychologically complex realism: only an implausibly short sea journey separates cosmopolitan, anti-Semitic Venice from the dreamlike, timeless world of Belmont where beautiful Portia idly waits for a suitor to solve the riddle of the three caskets and claim her for his prize.

Sigmund Freud was intrigued by these caskets of gold, silver and lead. Bassanio - Portia's lover - makes the right choice when he goes for plain, 'dumb' lead, even though this is ostensibly a symbol of silence and death. But such is the human resistance to our own mortality that we have invented this symbol only to ingeniously reverse it to mean its opposite: love, laughter and fertility, although the ghost of its original meaning is still present.

I want to explore Freud's explanation - where even symbols seem to have their own unconscious - and then consider the role this casket scene has on the play as a whole, which Freud chose not to do. Could this scene be regarded as acting as the play's unconscious? If it can, then it makes some startling revelations that turn the apparent message of the play if not upside-down then certainly lop-sided.

Sindhuja Sankaran (Cardiff)

From Mythology to Reality: Dominance of psychoanalytical concepts in Indian Culture

The Mahabharata, one of the greatest Indian epics is said to be the longest poem in the world. This tale is full of drama, scheming, jealousy, human foibles and failings primarily between two groups of cousins - Pandavas and Kauravas. The differences between these two groups finally resulted in the inevitable war at Kurukshetra. The story of Mahabharata has lived down generations and there is a strong sense of connection that every individual feels with the great epic. Be it the characters or just the plot. The story on the whole is rather simple but the dynamics involved speaks mystery and underlying concepts which has been deep rooted in history. Psychodynamic theories have always attempted to explain such phenomenon and this paper, outlined the basic structure of Mahabharata with a help of few instances and explain in terms of such theories. The main forces in the epic - the cousins and the intervention of Lord Krishna were analysed in terms of Freud's structure of the mind. The entire story was structured along the lines of Id, Ego and Superego and characters emerged as their unique selves. This paper dealt with interpersonal issues, intrapersonal issues, concept of faith, sexuality and even psychopathology. Psychodynamic theories however cannot be limited to only Freud, thus an eclectic

approach was used to analyse the plot with citations from Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. There is a lot of research that has been going on in cultural specificity of these theories, and the relevance in today's world. This paper will thus help bridge the gap between culture, history and psychoanalysis.

Julie Walsh (Cambridge)

The Problem of Ordinariness: Some Thoughts on the Cultural Recommendations of Psychoanalysis

Cultural analysis is often facilitated by the language of 'character', where characters ultimately compete for status as cultural heroes. It is aggregate characters - character types/ideal types - who facilitate an analysis of society (e.g. rational man, economic man, psychological man, or the aesthete-hedonist, the manager, the therapist), and it is individual characters (e.g. Sigmund Freud) who, with their heroic or even mythical attributes, stand as cultural representations of a socio-historical moment.

The figure of the 'ordinary hero' is one such character. Particularly associated with nineteenth century *fin de siècle* thought, the ordinary hero has a substantial heritage; one of questions underlying this paper is, **to what extent does Freudian psychoanalysis champion his ascendancy?** My response to this question will engage with the work of Richard Rorty where 'ordinariness' features as a key problematic. I shall offer a critique of Rorty's reading of how ordinariness becomes a cultural value and suggest that his deployment of Philip Larkin's poetry to support his case is flawed.

My paper will be divided into three sections;

- 1) Most substantially, I shall consider Rorty's reading of Freud's contribution to culture in terms de-divinising the self. Here we will see how Rorty's espoused character-type (the liberal ironist), is defined by the contingency of selfhood that he so closely associates with Freudian thought. Rorty's use of Larkin's poem *Continuing To Live* will be investigated at this point.
- 2) I shall then offer a speculative characterisation of Larkin's poetry in terms of its anti-heroism, arguing that, contrary to Rorty's inclination, the ordinariness that Larkin identifies and embodies does not, for him, constitute a cultural recommendation.
- 3) Having contrasted Rorty's and Larkin's treatment of ordinariness, I will ask which position is more in tune with that of Freudian psychoanalysis.