

CFP: Psychoanalysis in Our Time 2018 – Psychoanalysis, Nationalism and Ideology, Sopot/Gdansk, Poland, 5th-7th October 2018

Now in its fifth year – and following the great success of sessions across Europe – the Psychoanalysis in Our Time research network is delighted to announce the call for papers for our next event, which will take place in association with the University of Gdansk, Poland from 5th to 7th October 2018. The topic for this symposium will be “Psychoanalysis, Nationalism and Ideology”.

We are very pleased to be able to say that the internationally acclaimed philosopher of the Slovenian School, Prof. Alenka Zupančič will be our keynote for this event.

This research initiative funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and supported by the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies aims to initiate and develop trans-disciplinary conversations. We believe in deep and ardent discussions in sessions and over meals and wine – which will be flowing freely. We have published a first edited collection stemming from meetings in Copenhagen and Tallinn, entitled *Psychoanalysis and The Unrepresentable: from Culture to the Clinic* (Routledge, 2016), and are currently working on a second collection, *Psychoanalysis and Femininity*, due for publication with Routledge next year.

The registration fee is £145, or £75 for students. There will be a possibility of a reduced fee for local participants. We will be working in a relatively small group and lunches and coffees will be provided, as well one dinner with wine as part of the registration fee. There will be no parallel sessions.

Please send an abstract (max. 300 words) and a short biographical statement to the coordinators: Agnieszka Piotrowska (agnieszka.piotrowska@beds.ac.uk), Ben Tyrer (ben.tyrer@kcl.ac.uk) and Charlotta Lund (lund.charlotta@gmail.com).

The deadline for submission is 31st July 2018.

We welcome submissions for 20-minute presentations from artists, academics and clinicians, and would invite different approaches to this subject through films, performances or creative writings from, for example, historians, film and literature scholars, or natural scientists with an interest in psychoanalysis.

Possible topics could include (but are not limited to):

- A move to the right? Current trends in Poland and in the world vis-à-vis the notion of interpellation
- Cinema, ideology, spectatorship – new trends in film theory
- Fake news, social media and ideology
- Television drama, ideology and interpellation
- Freud and group psychology: ego, libido and the “mass”
- Psychoanalysis and fascism (e.g. Wilhelm Reich – *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*)
- Freudo-Marxism and the Frankfurt School (Marcuse, Fromm)
- Lacan and Marx / “How Marx invented the symptom”
- The Slovenian School and contemporary ideology critique (Žižek, Dolar, Zupančič)

- Lacan and the political Left/the Essex School (Laclau and Mouffe, Stavrakakis, Glynos)
- Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism (Raymond Williams, Frederic Jameson)
- Marxism, Maoism and psychoanalysis in Paris (Althusser, Badiou)
- Ideology, interpassivity and belief (Robert Pfaller)
- Psychoanalysis and Neoliberalism (Todd McGowan, Paul Verhaeghe, Mark Fisher)
- Colonialism, anti-colonialism and ideology through psychoanalysis (Fanon, Octave Mannoni)
- Intersectionality and ideology in cinema and culture – new ideas
- Ideological critique of psychoanalysis (Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari)

We look forward to receiving your proposals. As always we aim to be outrageous but scholarly and rigorous. We welcome psychoanalytically-inspired performance pieces too.

Best wishes

Agnieszka, Ben and Charlotta

Further Details:

Sigmund Freud was, from the outset, interested in belief systems, individual and group dynamics, and the organisation of (Western) society. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), he theorised the binding force of identification with a leader, which thus allows the group to take on a shared ideal and act in irrational ways. Further, in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) he characterises religion as a sort of “false consciousness” – even while Marx had rather different ideas about the origins of this phenomenon – defining it as: “certain dogmas, assertions about facts and conditions of external and internal reality which tells one something that one has not oneself discovered, and which claim that one should give them credence”. He, moreover, noted the *libidinal* dimension of such an “illusion”, which differentiated it from a simple “error” and accounted for the subject’s profound attachment to the system.

In his later work, these interests took on more sociological – even cosmological – dimensions, as Freud saw the fundamental conflicts of the psyche to be at the very heart of any notion of “civilisation”. His essay, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930) – perhaps more accurately translated as “The Unease in Culture” than “Civilisation and Its Discontents” – examined the perpetual tension between the individual and the group, suggesting that social bonds were founded on the necessary repression of drive forces and an imposed conformity to certain norms.

Rapidly, these notions fused with the tenets of Marxism – group fantasy meeting notions of the “ruling ideas”, etc. – in a heterogeneous body of work that sought to reconcile Freudian insights with Marxian materialist analysis. Freudo-Marxist thinkers such as Wilhelm Reich and Otto Fenichel attempted to understand social and psychodynamic forces shaping their worlds, with the former (in)famously tying the rise of fascism to sexual repression. Members of the Frankfurt School were similarly influenced by Freud, with Herbert Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization* (1955) elaborating

a vision of a non-repressive society and a utopian system of social relations, and his later *One Dimensional Man* (1964) assessing the ideological landscapes of both capitalist and communist life.

Jacques Lacan similarly explored ideas of belief and fantasy – and as Samo Tomšič delineates in his own work, *The Capitalist Unconscious* (2015) – consistently engaged with Marx and Marxian ideas throughout his career. In his analysis of the Symbolic and the notion of the big Other, Lacan gave accounts of the individual experience of the social order and laid the groundwork for an anti-authoritarian theory of psychoanalysis. He was himself radically anti-authoritarian and suspicious of dogma and doctrine when it came to Freudian training and practice, while also running his own School(s) in the expectation of strict obedience: perhaps best summed up by his support of the students during the May '68 uprising, warning them “not to be seduced by the government’s attempts to cool them out with the promises of dialogue and participation: ‘There is no such thing as dialogue, it is a swindle’”, while telling his own students a year later at Vincennes, “What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one” (cf. Turkle 1992).

The impact of Lacan on a generation of academics and students has shaped the Western intellectual landscape for the last 50 years, particularly in the realm of political philosophy and theories of ideology: from Louis Althusser’s ground-breaking synthesis of Gramsci and Lacan in his essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” to Alain Badiou’s critique of ideology in/and the unconscious and his later, Lacanian ethics of the Event. And in a UK context, the Essex School of political theorists – such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe – established a profoundly influential centre for rethinking Marxist notions of class, identity and social structure through a Lacanian analysis of discourse: summed up in their foundational work, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985).

Slavoj Žižek has shown the particular effectivity of psychoanalysing ideology through popular culture, as strikingly illustrated by his discussion – for example – of the “critique of ideology glasses” discovered by John Nada – the protagonist of John Carpenter’s 1988 cult classic, *They Live!* – which reveal the fundamental ideological fantasy of contemporary LA capitalism (Obey! Consume! Reproduce!). He has even taken to the screen himself to demonstrate what a Lacanian analysis of *The Sound of Music* or a bottle of Coca Cola can reveal about our spontaneous experience of the world, the power structures and dominant beliefs of our times. Together with his colleagues, Alenka Zupančič and Mladen Dolar, the so-called Slovenian School presents arguably the most vital manifestation of this conjunction of psychoanalysis and ideology critique.

Of course, psychoanalytic discourses themselves are not neutral and have been the subject of critique – if not direct attack – by a number of contemporary thinkers: from Foucault’s deconstruction of the “repressive hypothesis” (cf. Marcuse) to the Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, which was openly hostile to a Freudian, “Oedipal” society. Indeed, psychoanalysis has been put, throughout its history, to conservative – even oppressive ends – from the rigidly normative practices of 1950s North American psychiatry to AMP and ECF member Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi’s complicity in the Congolese genocide of the 1990s. What are the responsibilities of psychoanalysis, of the analyst, of the analysand, of the theorist, of the clinician, in such cases?

We open the forum to discuss all of these topics and more. What are the ideological coordinates of psychoanalysis? In what ways could we consider psychoanalysis to be ideological? In what ways do psychoanalytic theory and practice support the dominant systems of today? How can they be used to challenge them? Does psychoanalysis have revolutionary potential? How can engagement with arts and culture help us to explore these wider contexts?

Psychoanalysis in Our Time (<http://psychoanalysisinourtime.wordpress.com>) is an international research initiative with the Nordic Summer University and the Nordic Council of Ministers (<http://nordic.university>), and a collaboration with the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies Psychoanalysis and Film Special Interest Group (<http://baftss.org/>). It has the aim of providing psychoanalytic interrogation of social, cultural and scientific issues. It is a trans-disciplinary network that aims to create a space for a dialogue between clinicians, academics and practitioners of psychoanalysis as well as scholars in other fields, including film, post-colonial, and literary studies in order to investigate and elaborate ways in which psychoanalytic thinking can assist in understanding the events and developments of our times.

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Dr
kcl.academia.edu/BenTyrer

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