

Arthur Eaton

Playing with Paradoxes: Winnicott's views on the Unconscious.

Winnicott's views on the unconscious must be considered in relation to the practitioners and theoreticians that he was (either in fact or in fantasy) in dialogue with (f.e. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Joan Riviere). His position in 'the middle' of the Controversial Discussions, held between followers of Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, led him to develop a concept of the unconscious that is neither as reified as Klein's – he moved away from a terminology that allowed speaking about a 'content' in phantasy of the unconscious, nor as noumenal as Anna Freud's, who famously stated that the unconscious is known solely 'through its derivatives' in consciousness. Central to Winnicott's changing ideas is the notion of an incommunicable element, with the 'spontaneous gesture' as an expression *in action* of what he called the True Self. In this paper we look at the different glimpses that Winnicott provides on the unconscious, and will show how they are related to his fascination for paradox.

Alexandra Bacopoulos-Viau, New York University.

From the writing cure to the talking cure: Revisiting the discovery of the unconscious

This paper illustrates the importance of 'automatic writing' in the making of the modern self. Specifically, it critically re-examines the role played by this practice in what Ellenberger famously called *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970). By focusing on the under-explored discourse about the 'subconscious', it points to a distinctly French model of the mind that emerged during the *fin de siècle*.

Emma Sutton, Queen Mary University of London

William James on "intra-personal belligerency"

This paper discusses some significant, but lesser-known, sources for James's model of the 'divided self' as described in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It draws attention to the prominence of the will as the locus of James's psychopathological paradigm, contrasting this with the ideas of some of his contemporaries who focussed on memory, depicting inner selves demarcated by acts of remembering and forgetting, rather than volitions.

Angus Nicholls, Queen Mary University of London

'The Unconscious': Concept or Metaphor?

The 'unconscious' emerged as a philosophical concept from Descartes, Leibniz and Kant's critical philosophy, before becoming a central theme in German idealism and in later thinkers such as Nietzsche and Freud. Yet when the unconscious is viewed according to Cartesian criteria for conceptual thought – clarity and distinctness – it becomes obvious that it is precisely that which is *not* clear and distinct, because it has not risen above the threshold of conscious awareness. This implies that the unconscious refers to phenomena that cannot be rendered conceptually, and which therefore require other modes of expression. In this paper I explore a metaphorical approach to the unconscious, asking to what extent its history since Kant is one of metaphors rather than concepts.

Rhodri Hayward, Queen Mary University of London

The Unconscious as an Emergent Object

Historical work on the unconscious has not kept pace with the new historiography around subjectivity and material culture. While historians explore constructionist approaches to selfhood – showing how new forms of subjectivity are made possible by changes in language, goods and embodied practice - they have largely ignored the cultural origins of unconscious life. Drawing upon the new literature in science studies on the emergence of investigative objects, this paper looks at the unconscious as an emergent phenomenon. It takes as a case study pre-Freudian psychotherapeutic work in Britain to consider how the unconscious was brought into existence.

Matt Ffytche, University of Essex

The Unconscious and the Private Life: Contemporary Transformations of a Psychoanalytic Idea

This paper focuses on a contemporary trend in psychoanalytic writing on the unconscious and sets it in the broader context of developments in psychoanalysis in the latter half of the twentieth century. Josh Cohen's recent monograph *The Private Life: Why We Remain in the Dark* exemplifies a turn in writing on the unconscious, particularly in the human sciences, which emphasises the hidden, enigmatic or mysterious aspects of everyday behaviour. At one level, such an approach has become more popular because of its accessibility - it introduces student or general audiences to the unconscious in a less technical manner. At another, it registers the impact of certain ideas from contemporary aesthetics, and from deconstruction and existential philosophy. But it is also grounded in tendencies within psychoanalytic theorisation itself, particularly within the independent tradition running back to Winnicott's writings on privacy and autonomy, and including developments in Milner, Khan and Bollas. The emphasis on unconscious sides of individual life runs all the way back to the Romantic period, and since that point it has always been prone to assimilation by discourses of the liberal self (though not exclusively so). Since Romanticism there has also existed an alliance between that notion of the unconscious self and medical psychology, which became more tightly forged with the emergence of psychoanalysis. One of the questions this paper poses is whether the discourse of the unconscious is once more detaching itself from medical psychology, and how far it can move in this direction under the sponsorship of psychoanalysis.

Sonu Shamdasani, University College London

The unconscious within the history of consciousness

Over recent decades, a considerable body of work has arisen on the history of concepts of the unconscious and cognate notions. Strikingly, there is a relative dearth of work on the history of concepts of consciousness. This paper reflects on this paradox, and what could be done to resituate histories of the unconscious within a wider history of consciousness.

Andreas Mayer (Centre A. Koyré, CNRS/EHESS Paris)

Situating the Unconscious: Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Psy Sciences

This paper discusses an anthropological approach to the history of the unconscious as an object of scientific investigation. The focus is the study of sites, practices, and techniques of the experimentalization of unconscious processes in the late 19th century. Shifting the focus of analysis from persons and concepts to concrete sites and practices illuminates the specificity of central configurations in this field, such as hypnotism and psychoanalysis.

Madeleine Wood, Queen Mary University of London

Interiority and the Mid-Victorian Parent-Child Relationship: Literary Inscriptions of the Unconscious

This paper argues that the mid-Victorian novel constructs a model of unconsciousness which pre-empted later theories (notably psychoanalysis), rather than simply deploying existing medical frameworks. In the novels unconsciousness is formulated in relation to the traumatic encounters that define parent-child relationships. Further, the category of the unconscious on which the texts rely is inseparable from the modes of narrative discourse employed. This raises critical questions concerning the relationship between representability and the unconscious, as well as revealing the complexities of mid-Victorian realism.

John Fletcher, University of Warwick

The unconscious, the id and the other: Laplanchean developments of Freud

The paper considers Jean Laplanche's critique of the dissonance within Freudian metapsychology between the biological id (with its accompanying notion of the self-preservative instinctual function) and the repressed unconscious, a secondary by-product of the ego's defense mechanisms (with its accompanying notion of the sexual drive). It examines Laplanche's theorisation of the repressed unconscious in relation to the figure of the adult 'other' and a typology of forms of transmission and reception between adult and infant.

Elsa Richardson, Queen Mary

Imagining the Imagination: Unconscious Creation in the Order of the Golden Dawn

This paper considers how theories of the imagination and of the mythopoetic shaped new understandings of the unconscious at the *fin de siècle*. More specifically it examines the peculiarly active unconscious pursued by members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. An elite society that provided initiated adepts with training in the practices of tarot divination, astrology, geomancy, scrying and astral travel, the Golden Dawn engaged the unconscious as a key element of their practical magic. My interest lies with how members of this magical society came to conceive of the unconscious as simultaneously psychological/interiorised and as a force capable of dictating or re-shaping exterior reality.