

# Departmental Seminars

Seminars are held on **Thursdays from 4.30 to 6.00pm in Seminar Room 2**, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Free School Lane, Cambridge. There is tea beforehand from 4pm in Seminar Room 1.

Organised by Lauren Kassell.

- 17 January **Harry M. Marks (Johns Hopkins University)**  
Biographical medicine: London consultants explain disease
- 24 January **Angela Breitenbach (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge)**  
Natural purposes, Kantian analogies and environmental ethics
- 31 January **Jon Agar (University College London)**  
Thatcher, scientist
- 7 February **David Bloor (University of Edinburgh)**  
Rival theories of the aerofoil: 1909-1926
- 14 February **Tara Nummedal (Brown University)**  
Contracting the philosopher's stone: fraud, risk and profit in early modern alchemy
- 21 February **Andreas Mayer (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)**  
Walking as a problem of the nineteenth century
- 6 March **Colin Jones and Emily Richardson (Queen Mary, University of London)**  
The politics and physiology of laughter in eighteenth-century France: the Saint-Aubins' *Livre des Culs*

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Seminar Programmes are sent out at the start of every term to the names on our mailing list. Please contact the Department if you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list, or if you change your address.

Seminar information is also available at [www.hps.cam.ac.uk/seminars](http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/seminars)

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# Abstracts

17 January **Harry M. Marks (Johns Hopkins University)**  
Biographical medicine: London consultants explain disease

It is a truism of medical historiography that, with the rise of pathological anatomy in early nineteenth-century Paris, physicians focused their attention on the signs of the physical body, neglecting patients' accounts of experience which had dominated in a client centred medicine. At best, an interest in the biography of disease survived on the margins of clinical practice, far away from the centres of hospital medicine. This paper examines the activities of a group of prominent London consultant physicians – William Gull, Sam Wilks and James Paget – who after years of doing and teaching morbid anatomy, turned to natural history to understand the variable manifestations of disease in their patients. They turned as well to organizing British general practitioners in a programme of research into the biography of disease. While an interest in natural history is not unknown in the second half of the nineteenth century, I will argue that this turn to the natural history of disease was rooted in the distinctive career paths of London consultants who spent multiple decades doing morbid anatomy before developing their clinical practices. It was the limitations of morbid anatomy, as they saw it, which led them to their interest in biographical medicine. Beyond the relevance of this story to medical history, I would like to explore two issues: 1) remnants of the zeitgeist – how do we best account for intellectual/epistemological developments in a discipline which resemble contemporaneous developments in other disciplines, without resorting to difficult claims about influence and/or zeitgeist? 2) Survivals: how do we best understand the survival, beyond the immediate milieu in which they originate, of heterodox intellectual traditions like the one analysed in this paper?

24 January **Angela Breitenbach (Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge)**  
Natural purposes, Kantian analogies and environmental ethics

Recent theories in environmental ethics are divided over the question whether we can ascribe intrinsic value to nature. According to anthropocentric approaches the sole locus of value is the human being and any obligation to protect our natural environment is ultimately reducible to a concern about humans. Biocentric accounts, by contrast, claim that nature has an absolute and intrinsic worth and that human beings therefore have a direct duty towards nature. While the anthropocentric perspective may be criticised for presenting nature merely as a resource for satisfying human needs and desires, biocentric approaches face the apparently insuperable problem of justifying the existence of independent value in nature. In this paper I develop an account which aims to overcome these difficulties by attributing to nature a value that is independent of its usefulness to human beings without making this value independent from the rational valuer. The account is inspired by Kant's analogical conception of purposes in nature. This may come as a surprise to those who view Kant as the chief exponent of anthropocentrism.

31 January **Jon Agar (University College London)**  
Thatcher, scientist

Did it matter that Margaret Thatcher, three times British prime minister, staunch opponent of socialism, fervid proponent of markets rather than governments as the agents of choice and change, had trained and worked as a research scientist? In the immense literature on Thatcher and Thatcherism, no author emphasizes, or even discusses in any depth, the connection between Thatcher, scientist, and Thatcher, politician. This paper reviews the evidence for a connection, and offers an interpretation of an important episode in the formation of British science policy that, I argue, has broad repercussions for how historians might revise the understandings of a saltation in twentieth-century political and economic history.

7 February **David Bloor (University of Edinburgh)**  
Rival theories of the aerofoil: 1909-1926

From the early years of aviation through World War One, until c. 1926, British and German experts in aerodynamics disagreed about how an aircraft wing generates lift. The British developed the discontinuity theory, the Germans the circulation theory. I shall describe the course of this divergence and seek to explain it in terms of differing mathematical traditions and their respective institutional roots. It emerges that the more successful theory was based on the least realistic physics. Welcome to relativism at 30,000 feet!

14 February **Tara Nummedal (Brown University)**

Contracting the philosopher's stone: fraud, risk and profit in early modern alchemy

For the princes who sought to hire alchemists, build laboratories, and fund substantial alchemical operations in the early modern Holy Roman Empire, the question of fraud was crucial. The possibility of hiring a false alchemist rather than a real one haunted princely desires to put alchemy into practice, yet patrons had few obvious resources for determining whether or not an individual was a fraud (or *Betrüger*). In this paper, I will examine the methods alchemical patrons and practitioners devised to minimize risk, as well as the consequences of those methods for the practice and meaning of alchemy in early modern central Europe.

21 February **Andreas Mayer (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)**

Walking as a problem of the nineteenth century

As with so many other human activities that are both mechanical and meaningful (e.g. sleeping and dreaming, sexual acts, artistic creation, the execution of music or the manifestations of religion), the inhabitants of the nineteenth century turned walking into a problem waiting for a scientific solution. Neither entirely transparent and fully conscious, nor completely shrouded in mystery, the act of walking was supposed to have its secret. How such a mundane activity became a problem for a variety of scientific disciplines in Western countries will be the subject of my talk.

6 March **Colin Jones and Emily Richardson (Queen Mary, University of London)**  
The politics and physiology of laughter in eighteenth-century France: the Saint-  
Aubins' *Livre des Culs*

The Saint-Aubins formed a dynasty of artists and craftsmen in eighteenth-century France. The best-known of them is Gabriel, who currently has an international exhibition devoted to him (New York, Paris). He and his brothers kept a number of sketch-books, one of which, owned by Waddesdon Manor, is the subject of the talk. The *Livre de caricatures tant bonnes que mauvaises* is largely the work of Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin, though it is in essence a collective work seemingly produced both by and for what Antoine de Baecque has termed a 'society of laughers'. The brothers are said to have referred to it as their *livre de culs*. Although there are indeed some arses in the book – including some famous ones, knowledge of whose depiction would have ended the Saint-Aubins in the Bastille – the characteristic of the work is its festive, humorous and frequently satirical character. The kind of caricature and satire it exemplifies is quite rare in France (England was different in this respect). In this paper, we will seek to examine the work and to place it in the context of French eighteenth-century medical, philosophical and political debates about laughter.

# History of Medicine

Seminars are on **Tuesdays from 5.00 to 6.30pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome!

## Early Medicine and Natural Philosophy

Organised by Lauren Kassell, Rob Ralley and Laurence Totelin.

15 January **Cathy McClive (Durham University)**

Negotiating masculinity: hermaphrodites and sexual difference in early modern France

5 February **Natacha Massar (Free University of Brussels)**

Serving men, serving gods: doctors and musicians in the ancient Greek world

26 February **Sasha Handley (University of Manchester)**

Thomas Willis and the pathology of sleep disorders

## History of Modern Medicine and Biology

Organised by Ayesha Nathoo and Vanessa Heggie.

12 February **Sarah Hodges (University of Warwick)**

Biotrash: medical garbage in India

4 March **Amanda Rees (University of York)**

Working with beasts: animal societies in 20th-century popular culture

# From Generation to Reproduction

This seminar, which is funded by our Wellcome enhancement award in the history of medicine, is a forum for discussion of how, since 1500, our world of reproductive practices and controversy was created.

Seminars are on **Tuesdays from 5.00 to 6.30pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome!

Organised by Jim Secord.

29 January **Lynn Morgan (Mount Holyoke College)**

Embryo genesis: how a handful of scientists produced an American origin story

19 February **William MacLehose (Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine)**

Reproduction and religion: paediatrics and devotion to the Christ Child in the Central Middle Ages

# Cabinet of Natural History

Seminars are held on **Mondays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**. You are welcome to bring your lunch with you. Organised by Salim Al-Gailani.

- 21 January **Nicola Gauld (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)**  
'What is meant by this system?' Charles Darwin and the visual re-ordering of nature
- 28 January **Elise Juzda (Faculty of History, Cambridge)**  
Skulls, science and the spoils of war: frontier violence and the creation of the US Army Medical Museum's cranial collection, 1869-1900
- 4 February **Simon Naylor (University of Exeter)**  
Cartographies of a scientific county: mapping Cornwall
- 11 February **Adelene Buckland (Cambridge Victorian Studies Group)**  
Gideon Mantell, Thomas Hardy, and the politics of geological knowledge
- 18 February **Brigitte Resl (University of Liverpool)**  
Distancing animals in medieval chronicles
- 25 February **Iris Montero Sobrevilla (HPS, Cambridge)**  
Transatlantic hum: Mexican hummingbirds and the French encyclopedic project
- 3 March **Gail Davies (University College London)**  
Locating species identity: towards a biogeography of transgenic life
- 10 March **Allison Ksiazkiewicz (HPS, Cambridge)**  
Saved by servitude: the display of horses at the Natural History Museum in London

# Psy Studies

## History of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Allied Sciences

Seminars are held on **Wednesdays at 5pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome. Organised by John Forrester and Deborah Thom.

- 30 January **Martin Dehli (Freelance historian, Berlin)**  
'Out of the shadows': Alexander Mitscherlich and psychoanalysis in Germany after 1945
- 13 February **Julia Borossa (Middlesex University)**  
Colonising and de-colonising psychoanalysis in the 1950s: Masud Khan amongst the British
- 27 February **Barbara Wurm (University of Vienna)**  
The psycho-reflexology of film: Soviet non-fiction cinema of the 1920s
- 12 March **Alexandra Lembert (University of Leipzig)**  
Exploring the human psyche: psychology and British psychic detective fiction at the turn of the 20th century
- 19 March **George Makari (Weill Medical College of Cornell University)**  
Revolution in mind: making the psychoanalytic field, 1870-1945

# Relativism Group

Meetings take place on **Tuesdays, 3.00-4.30pm in Seminar Room 1**. In some weeks the focus will be a talk, in other weeks we will discuss a key text. (Copies of these texts will be available in the Whipple Library.) Everyone welcome!

For further information contact Martin Kusch.

- 22 January **Martin Kusch** will give a talk entitled ‘Epistemic relativism defended’
- 29 January **Juan Vicente Mayoral de Lucas** will give a talk entitled ‘Boghossian on relativism and epistemic justification’
- 5 February Discussion of S.D. Hales ‘The Relativist Solution’ (in S.D. Hales, *Relativism and the Foundations of Philosophy*, MIT Press, 2006, pp. 97-142)
- 12 February Discussion of J. MacFarlane, ‘Relativism and Disagreement’, *Philosophical Studies* 132 (2007), 17-31
- 19 February **Justin Cruickshank** will give a talk entitled ‘Epistemic relativity, epistemic exemplars, and problem solving’
- 26 February Discussion of S. Blackburn, ‘Relativism, Subjectivism, Knowledge’ (in S. Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 279-310)
- 4 March **Richard Raatzsch** will give a talk entitled ‘Lear’s madness’
- 11 March Discussion of D.B. Wong, ‘Pluralistic Relativism’ (in D.B. Wong, *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 29-75)

# Metaphysics of Science Reading Group

This new group aims to further our understanding of topics in this fruitful but occasionally tricky research area. The focus is on topics of contemporary interest. No special scientific or technical knowledge is required. Meetings will take place on **Mondays, 1.00-2.30pm in the HPS Lodge**. All welcome. Organised by Alex Broadbent.

This term we will be reading from Huw Price and Richard Corry (eds), *Causation, Physics and the Constitution of Reality: Russell’s Republic Revisited*, Oxford University Press 2007. The first chapter is a short and approachable summary of the topics covered in the collection.

- 21 January Causation as Folk Science – John Norton
- 28 January What Russell Got Right – Christopher Hitchcock
- 4 February Causation with a Human Face – Jim Woodward
- 11 February Isolation and Folk Physics – Adam Elga
- 18 February Agency and Causation – Arif Ahmed
- 25 February Causation in Context – Peter Menzies
- 3 March Causal Perspectivalism – Huw Price
- 10 March Causation, Counterfactuals, and Entropy – Mathias Frisch

# History of Science Workshop

The History of Science Workshop is a seminar group devoted to peer discussion of work in progress on the history and historiography of science, for example PhD chapters, dissertations, articles intended for publication or conference papers. The seminar aims to provide an informal arena for the exchange of ideas among students of the history of science in HPS and elsewhere.

We meet on **alternate Wednesdays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1.**

Please contact Iris Montero if you are interested in giving a paper.

23 January **Sophia Davis (HPS, Cambridge)**

Military landscapes and secret science: mythical and empirical histories of the Suffolk coast

6 February **Robin Scheffler (HPS, Cambridge)**

Political radicalism and scientific discovery: the Cambridge Biotheoretical Gathering, 1932-1937

20 February **Leon Rocha (HPS, Cambridge)**

Zhang Jingsheng and the 'sexual field' in 1920s China

5 March **Mirjam Brusius (HPS, Cambridge)**

Preserving the forgotten: Fox Talbot's interest in the antique – and what it has to do with photography

# Philosophy Workshop

The PW is a fortnightly peer group seminar devoted to the discussion of on-going work by researchers in philosophy. Short papers will normally be circulated by e-mail one week in advance of each meeting, where the author will give a brief synopsis. The aim of the seminar is to provide a forum for informal, constructive interaction amongst those currently engaged in philosophical research.

Meetings take place **every other Wednesday at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**, and are open to all researchers. For more information, or to add your name to the list of e-mail recipients, contact Mark Sprevak.

30 January **Mike Collins (HPS, Cambridge)**

The primacy of secondary qualities

13 February **Martin Peterson (HPS, Cambridge)**

Subjective probability and action guidance

27 February **Sasha Mudd (HPS, Cambridge)**

Practical judgement: a Kantian perspective

12 March **Mark Sprevak (HPS, Cambridge)**

Mind-dependence and realism about the mind



# Science and Literature Reading Group

This term we will be reading about atomic physics and quantum mechanics. Copies of all the texts will be placed in the Whipple Library box file.

We meet on **Mondays from 7.30 to 9pm in the upstairs seminar room of Darwin College**. All are welcome!

Organised by Daniel Friesner (Science Museum) and Melanie Keene (HPS). For further information, visit our weblog: <http://sci-lit-reading-group.blogspot.com>

21 January We will look at the rise and fall of the 'solar system' model of atomic structure, as it was presented in the popular journal *Scientific American*

A. H. Compton, 'What Is Matter Made Of?' (May 15, 1915, pp. 451-2).

S. Dushman, 'Beyond the Microscope' (June 1922, pp. 372-3).

A. T. Merrick, 'Solar Systems Inside the Atom' (February 1925, pp. 80-1).

A. T. Merrick, 'The Marvellous Speeds of Atomic Particles' (March 1925, p. 301).

P. R. Heyl, 'What Is An Atom?' (July 1928, pp. 9-12).

'Our Point of View: Whose Fault is It?' (November 1931, p. 299).

4 February Psychological roots of complementarity

William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), Vol. 1, Chapter IX, 'The stream of thought'. London: Macmillan and Co, 1891, pp. 224-290 (esp. pp. 229-248).

Niels Bohr, 'The Quantum of Action and the Description of Nature' (1929). In *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934, pp. 92-101.

18 February Some literary uses of the new physics

Aldous Huxley, *Those Barren Leaves*, Part V, Chapter 1. London: Chatto and Windus, 1925, pp. 339-348.

Robert Frost, 'Version' (1962). We will use the complete text of this poem, as published in *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, ed. E. C. Lathem. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, p. 427.

Michael Roberts, 'On mechanical hallelujahs, or how not to do it'. *Poetry Review*, Vol. XIX, 1928, pp. 433-8 (esp. pp. 437-8).

Robert Frost, 'Education by Poetry' (1931). In *Selected Prose of Robert Frost*, ed. H. Cox & E.C. Lathem. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966, pp. 33-46 (esp. pp. 36-41).

3 March Two stories about multiple worlds and uncertainty

Jorge Luis Borges, 'The garden of forking paths' (1941). Several English translations available, e.g. by Helen Temple and Ruthven Todd in *Ficciones*, ed. A. Kerrigan. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962, pp. 89-101.

Fred Hoyle, 'A jury of five'. In *Element 79*. New York: New American Library, 1967, pp. 114-132.

# Kant Reading Group

The Kant Reading Group will be reading the Dialectic of the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the Introduction to the *Doctrine of Virtue* this term. We are meeting on **Tuesdays, 1.00–2.30pm in the HPS Lodge**. Everyone welcome!

For more information or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Angela Breitenbach.

- 22 January *Analytic of Pure Practical Reason* Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason (V 89-106). Presentation: Sasha Mudd
- 29 January *Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason*, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, I-II (V 107-119). Presentation: Alix Cohen
- 5 February *Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason*, Chapter 2, III-V (V 119-132). Presentation: Stephen John
- 12 February *Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason*, Chapter 2, VI-IX (V 132-148). Presentation: Angela Breitenbach
- 19 February *Doctrine of Method of Pure Practical Reason* (V 151-163). Presentation: Sacha Golob
- 26 February *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue*, Preface, Introduction, I-V (VI 375-388). Presentation: Yoon Choi
- 4 March *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue*, Introduction, VI-XI (VI 388-398). Presentation: TBC
- 11 March *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue*, Introduction, XII-XVIII (VI 399-413). Presentation: TBC

# Latin Therapy

The Latin Therapy Group meets on **Fridays at 4pm in the HPS Lodge** to practise the art of translation, improve our Latin grammar, and determine who deserves more sympathy on account of the difficulty of their sources – all in a mutually supportive environment!

Each week we study a classical, medieval or early modern text related to the history of science, often selected by members of the group as part of their research. We warm up with a short introductory piece before moving onto the main text – aiming to produce a working translation each week. Latin texts are circulated in advance, and further support is provided by our language tutor, Debby Banham. All are welcome to attend.

From time to time the group also organises social events and field trips. Details of past events and publications, together with a host of Latin-related links and resources, can be found on the group's website at [www.hps.cam.ac.uk/latintherapy](http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/latintherapy).

For more information, and to be added to the mailing list, please contact Jenny Rampling.

# History and Theory Reading Group

The group will discuss articles (their own, and those of others) relating to problems of historical research, interpretation, explanation and narration. Articles will be placed well in advance in a History and Theory box in the Whipple. We meet on **Fridays, 2.30pm to 4pm in the HPS Lodge**.

Organised by Marina Frasca-Spada, Nick Jardine and Signe Nipper Nielsen.

18 January **Silvia de Renzi:** Where is honour, what is honour? Ranking medicine in early modern Rome

‘The Honour of the Art. Ranking Medicine in Seventeenth-Century Rome’. Unpublished chapter from Silvia de Renzi’s forthcoming book on medicine in Counter-Reformation Rome.

1 February **Nick Jardine:** Truth-to-nature: types and individuals

Chapters 1 and (especially) 2 of Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

15 February **Lisa Mullins:** History and narrative

Readings: TBA

7 March **Jim Secord:** Mechanical objectivity

‘Mechanical Objectivity’ pp. 115-90 in Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

## German Therapy

German Therapy in Lent Term will be on **Wednesdays at 9am in the HPS Lodge**.

German Therapy is open to anyone who would like to learn how to read and understand original German sources and discuss possibilities of translating them to English. Last term we read and translated Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* and a short text by Kant. Members are very welcome to bring a text which is currently part of their research. We also do exercises to improve or brush up our grammar and reading skills. The course does not require an advanced level of German. All are welcome to attend.

For further information please contact Mirjam Brusius.