

Departmental Seminars

Seminars are held on **Thursdays from 4.30 to 6.00pm in Seminar Room 2**, with tea beforehand from 4pm in Seminar Room 1. Organised by Lauren Kassell.

- 18 October **Alice Jenkins (University of Glasgow and CRASSH, Cambridge)**
Sybil in particulars and generals: inductive logic and Victorian narrative
- 25 October **Jonathan Dancy (University of Reading and University of Texas at Austin)**
Practical reasoning and inference
- 1 November **Alisha Rankin (Trinity College, Cambridge)**
Panacea's daughters: gentlewomen healers and experiential knowledge in early modern Germany
- 8 November **Francesco Guala (University of Exeter)**
Are there Lewis conventions?
- 15 November **Ayesha Nathoo (Clare Hall, Cambridge)**
'A year of resurrection, a year of grotesque horror': heart transplants and the media in 1968
- 22 November **Susan James (Birkbeck, University of London)**
Spinoza on law and sovereignty
- 29 November *Third Cambridge Wellcome Lecture in the History of Medicine*
Simon Szreter (St John's College, Cambridge)
Proving a negative? How important was sexual abstinence during the fertility decline?

Research Topics and Resources Seminars

Seminars on research topics and resources in history and philosophy of the sciences and medicine, for all new graduate students, are held in the first two weeks of term, on **Thursdays at 4pm in Seminar Room 2**. Tea is available from 3.45pm in Seminar Room 1. All welcome.

Each seminar will consist of short informal talks presenting research methodologies and areas. The Research Guide is on the HPS website at www.hps.cam.ac.uk/research.

Organised by Nick Jardine and Eleanor Robson.

- 4 October **Nick Jardine:** Reading groups, seminars and other resources
Peter Lipton: How to write a philosophy essay
Ruth Horry: Working on Whipple Collection objects
Stephen John: Bioethics
Ayesha Nathoo: Modern medicine and media research
- 11 October **Eleanor Robson:** History and translation
Patricia Fara: Scientific images
Sacha Golob: Reading Continental philosophy
Jenny Rampling: A medieval and early modern toolkit
John Forrester: Lost in trivia

Abstracts

18 October **Alice Jenkins (University of Glasgow and CRASSH, Cambridge)**
Sybil in particulars and generals: inductive logic and Victorian narrative

Much of the triumphalism of early Victorian writing about physical science came from a belief that modern inductive reasoning gave much stronger methodological underpinnings than those supporting earlier science. While not claimed to be infallible, inductive science was held to incorporate methods for allowing for and dealing with fallibility, so that errors could be rectified without fundamental principles being affected. In the words of the Scottish writer James Douglas, an advocate for progressive education, 'being rooted in nature, inductive philosophy has the principle of growth in it'. All the scientific disciplines, it was widely argued, were now founded on this logic; indeed it was the defining quality of a modern scientific discipline that it be so founded. And induction was also being taken up by practitioners of other kinds of knowledge, who were spreading the benefits of its secure method well beyond the sciences.

Following work by Susan Faye Cannon, recent scholarship by Jonathan Smith, Laura J. Snyder, Mary Poovey and others has questioned the usefulness of nineteenth-century inductivism for practising scientists. I will argue that the interesting point about the early Victorian period's tendency to rally round the banner of induction is less its practical effects on the history of scientific discovery than its role in constructing standards for measuring the difference between modernity and pre-modernity, and for disseminating a narrative pattern which seemed to represent the shape which authoritative knowledge should take. Both these effects of the triumph of induction were felt extensively in culture outside scientific circles. My paper investigates the effects of the spreading prestige of inductive reasoning from science into other areas of knowledge production, particularly those predicated on narrative. As my title suggests, I will focus especially on the role of the inductive method in the 'social problem' or 'condition of England' novel of the 1840s and 50s.

25 October **Jonathan Dancy (University of Reading and University of Texas at Austin)**
Practical reasoning and inference

One way of capturing the force of practical reasoning, or deliberation, is to think of it as inference (e.g. the practical syllogism). I reject this inferential model, and offer another, under which the force of reasoning is of a rather different sort. The conclusion of a process of deliberation can, on this new model, be an action, and such deliberation can have a structure, but it is not inferential structure.

1 November **Alisha Rankin (Trinity College, Cambridge)**
Panacea's daughters: gentlewomen healers and experiential knowledge in early modern Germany

A number of learned physicians in sixteenth-century Germany sang the praises of a particular type of healer: a gentlewoman who made medicinal remedies and handed them out to the sick poor (also helping ill aristocrats and patricians in the bargain). This paper examines the topos of the gentlewoman-healer, arguing that aristocratic women gained respect as medical practitioners not in spite of their gender, but because of it. Particularly, it focuses on gentlewomen's reliance on experience and empirical observation to confirm the success of their medical remedies, categories that overlapped with a new interest in observation in learned medical spheres.

8 November **Francesco Guala (University of Exeter)**

Are there Lewis conventions?

David Lewis' analysis of conventions has been influential both in the philosophy of social science and in social science itself. In particular, it has illustrated the potential of game theoretic models in social ontology as well their limitations, and the importance of history for the analysis of social institutions. But are there any genuine Lewis-Conventions? In this paper I show how this question can be investigated using simple experimental techniques, and criticize those philosophers who try to refute Lewis' theory using the traditional tools of language analysis and intuition.

15 November **Ayesha Nathoo (Clare Hall, Cambridge)**

'A year of resurrection, a year of grotesque horror': heart transplants and the media in 1968

In December 1967 a relatively unknown surgeon, Christiaan Barnard, transplanted the heart of a young, female road-accident victim into a 54-year-old Cape Town grocer, Louis Washkansky. The operation received media attention that was unprecedented for a medical undertaking, transforming Barnard and Washkansky into international celebrities overnight. Although Washkansky lived for only 18 days with his new heart, in 1968 over 100 transplants were performed worldwide. Most of the recipients died within days or weeks of their revolutionary surgery and from the end of 1969 the procedure was all but abandoned for a decade. In the already turbulent period of the late 1960s, human heart transplantation proved to be an ethical minefield that challenged existing notions of life and death. I argue that the public nature of this controversial surgical feat fundamentally changed medical-media relations and directly affected the outcome of the heart-transplant enterprise. This talk aims to shed new light on arguably the most famous operation of the twentieth century, and its repercussions for media and medical history.

22 November **Susan James (Birkbeck, University of London)**

Spinoza on law and sovereignty

There's a moment in the history of early modern philosophy when the idea that humans are subject to the commands of God is challenged and rejected. Can we locate it? Perhaps the earliest philosopher who wholeheartedly gives up this orthodox view is Benedict Spinoza. In this paper I examine Spinoza's wide-ranging argument for his claim that all laws, in the sense of commands, are made and imposed by human beings rather than by the deity. I show how he defends this conclusion by embedding it in his wider metaphysics and politics. I go on to examine some consequences of this move, concentrating on the instabilities it produces in Spinoza's distinction between reason and imagination.

29 November *Third Cambridge Wellcome Lecture in the History of Medicine*

Simon Szreter (St John's College, Cambridge)

Proving a negative? How important was sexual abstinence during the fertility decline?

One of the main conclusions of the author's *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860-1940* (CUP 1996) was that some form of sexual abstinence in marriage had probably been an important, integral feature of birth control in Britain during the secular national fertility decline. This conclusion followed as an inference from innovative demographic analysis of the mass of quantitative data generated by the 1911 census, alongside reconsideration of the implications of certain contemporary qualitative sources and aspects of the period's cultural history and gender politics. However, how can we ever prove this negative – that married couples in the privacy of their marriages increasingly refrained from sex during the period 1860-1940? How can we obtain positive confirmation of something people did not do – in a culture which generally did not talk about the subject? In order to attempt to address this, the author secured ESRC funding for a novel oral history project, carried out during 1998-2000, by the author and Dr Kate Fisher (University of Exeter). About 90 married persons born in the first quarter of the twentieth century were interviewed and asked to talk about sex in their marriages. Both men and women, middle and working-class, from the industrial north and the affluent south were interviewed. This lecture, drawn from a chapter drafted for a forthcoming co-authored book, will give a first presentation of what the respondents said about the relationship between birth control and abstinence in their marriages.

Reading:

K. Fisher and S. Szreter, "'They prefer withdrawal': the choice of birth control method in Britain, 1918-1950" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, 2 (2003), 263-91.

S. Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860-1940* (Cambridge University Press 1996), ch.8.

There will be tea before the lecture, at 4pm in Seminar Room 1, and a drinks reception afterwards, at 6pm in Seminar Room 1.

Special Seminars

Hans Radder (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

The material realisation and conceptual interpretation of observational processes

3pm, Monday 15 October, Seminar Room 1

This paper presents a philosophical account of observation. The argument is that a human observer may be seen as a self-interpreting observational instrument which has arisen in the course of a material and socio-cultural evolution and which actively engages the world in attempts at materially realising and conceptually interpreting observational processes.

Jim Flynn (University of Otago)

Saving equality from the dustbin of history: a refutation of the 'meritocracy thesis' from *The Bell Curve*

2pm, Friday 7 December, Maxwell Lecture Theatre, SPS

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.

- 9 October **Alec Ryrie (Durham University)**
Fraud, sorcery and medicine in the 1540s: the double life of Gregory Wisdom
- 30 October **Adrian Wilson (University of Leeds)**
Interrogating the prehistory of Caesarean section
- 20 November **Lindsey Fitzharris (University of Oxford)**
Through the eyes of a seventeenth-century physician: reassessing John Webster

History of Modern Medicine and Biology

Organised by Ayesha Nathoo and Vanessa Heggie.

- 16 October **Bonnie Evans (HPS, Cambridge)**
How psychology lost its drive: the establishment of child psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital, 1923-1938
- 6 November **Sanjoy Bhattacharya (Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine, UCL)**
Global prescriptions, local adaptations: South Asia, the WHO and the global programme to eradicate smallpox
- 27 November **Duncan Wilson (University of Manchester)**
The science of self-destruction: animal suicide and the human condition

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.

- 23 October **Evelleen Richards (University of Sydney)**
Do females have a choice? Darwin, the breeders and the problem of female choice
- 13 November **Solveig Jülich (Stockholm University)**
Questioning the images of life before birth: Lennart Nilsson's fetal photographs in public debate

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.

- 8 October **Pietro Corsi (University of Oxford)**
'Objects, images, books'. Networks of validation in mid-nineteenth-century geology: Italy, France, England
- 15 October **Carlos López Beltrán (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México)**
Hippocratic bodies: Castas and temperament in the New Spain
- 22 October **FUNGUS HUNT**
- 29 October **Helen Cowie (University of Warwick)**
'Peripheral vision': science and Creole patriotism in eighteenth-century Spanish America
- 5 November **Sam Alberti (Manchester Museum)**
Practice and technique in the twentieth-century natural history museum
- 12 November **Lawrence Dritsas (University of Edinburgh)**
'Ecological reconnaissance': expert visitors to Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s
- 19 November **David Allan Feller (HPS, Cambridge)**
The hunter's gaze: establishing a 'period eye' in Charles Darwin's scientific methodology
- 26 November **Kathleen Walker-Meikle (University College London)**
Animals in medical experiments in the Middle Ages

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.

- 17 October **Peter Mandler (Faculty of History, Cambridge)**
Margaret Mead amongst the natives of Great Britain
- 31 October **John Forrester (HPS, Cambridge)**
1919: psychology and psychoanalysis, Cambridge and London
- 14 November **Katherine Angel (HPS, Cambridge)**
The discomfiting past of peptic ulcer: histories of psychosomatic medicine and *H. pylori*
- 28 November **Martin Dehli (Freelance historian, Berlin)**
'Out of the shadows': Alexander Mitscherlich and psychoanalysis in Germany after 1945

Epistemology Reading Group

We will be reading from Paul K. Moser (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (OUP, 2002). The book is available in paperback, and two copies are on reserve in the Whipple Library. Each meeting of the group will focus on one essay, with a member of the group offering a preliminary evaluation, followed by a general discussion.

Meetings will take place on **Thursdays at 2pm in Seminar Room 1** and are open to all. Organised by Peter Lipton.

- 4 October William G. Lycan, 'Explanation and Epistemology'
- 11 October Philip Kitcher, 'Scientific Knowledge'
- 18 October Alvin Goldman, 'The Sciences and Epistemology'
- 25 October Peter Klein, 'Skepticism'
- 1 November Albert Casullo, 'A Priori Knowledge'
- 8 November Ernest Sosa, 'Tracking, Competence, and Knowledge'
- 15 November John Greco, 'Virtues in Epistemology'
- 22 November Richard Foley, 'Conceptual Diversity in Epistemology'

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.

- 17 October **Berry Groisman (DAMPT, Cambridge)**
Is teleportation a (quantum) mystery?
- 31 October **Charlotte Werndl (Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge)**
The special kind of unpredictability of chaotic systems
- 14 November **Louise Braddock (Girton College, Cambridge)**
Psychological identification and numerical identity: the unlikely connection
- 28 November **Mike Collins (HPS, Cambridge)**
The primacy of secondary qualities

Science and Literature Reading Group

This term we will be reading about astronomers and astronomy. All the texts are available online; copies will also 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>

15 October Dante Alighieri, *Purgatory* (c. 1321), Canto 4
John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1674), Book 8, lines 1-197

29 October Thomas Hardy, *Two on a Tower* (1882), Chapter 4
George Meredith, 'Meditation under stars' (1888)

12 November Leonid Andreieff, *To the Stars* (1905), especially Act IV
The most easily available English translation is by A. Goudiss, in *Poet Lore*, Winter 1907. You can find it by logging on to Periodicals Archive Online, and then searching under author 'Andreieff'.

26 November William Wordsworth, 'Star Gazers' (1807)
Walt Whitman, 'When I heard the learn'd astronomer' (1865)
Virginia Woolf, 'The Searchlight' (1943)

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.

This term a behind-the-scenes trip to the British Museum is planned, giving therapists the opportunity to select and examine favourite items from the collection, and to practise some on-site translation of inscriptions.

For more information, and to be added to the mailing list, please contact Jenny Rampling. Information is also available on the Latin Therapy website, www.hps.cam.ac.uk/latintherapy.

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 Lodge.**

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

12 October **Signe Nipper Nielsen:** History and empathy

Barbara Duden, 'The Illusion to Viewing the Patient's "Body" in Medical Texts', unpublished working paper presented at the Nordic Seminar in Ebeltoft, Denmark, April 2000, 'Traces of the Past – Eyes of the Present'.

Megan Boler, 'The Risks of Empathy: Interrogating Multiculturalism's Gaze', *Cultural Studies*, 11:2 (1997), pp. 253-73.

Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito and the History of Madness', in *Writing and Difference* (London, Routledge, 1997), pp. 31-63.

26 October **Salim Al-Gailani:** History and reading

Dominick LaCapra, 'History, Language, and Reading: Waiting for Crillon', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (June 1995), pp. 799-828. Available on JSTOR.

9 November **Nick Tosh:** Anachronism

'Anachronism and retrospective explanation: in defence of a present-centred history of science', *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 34 (2003) 647-659.

This paper defends the right of historians to make use of their knowledge of the remote consequences of past actions. In particular, it is argued that the disciplinary cohesion of the history of science relies crucially upon our ability to target, for further investigation, those past activities ancestral to modern science. The history of science is not limited to the study of those activities but it is structured around them. In this sense, the discipline is inherently 'present-centred': its boundaries are determined, in part, by judgements inaccessible to the historical actors. Present-centredness of this sort, it is urged, should not be regarded as a problem; its methodological consequences are minimal.

30 November **Silvia de Renzi:** The status of medicine

'Where is honour, what is honour? Ranking medicine in early modern Rome'

This is a chapter on how early modern physicians discussed the status of medicine in the framework of social and intellectual competition with other arts and kinds of knowledge, and also how in doing so they contributed to contemporary controversies on the sources and meaning of honour – a fundamental category at the time.