



1ST International Health Humanities Conference
Madness and Literature

The University of Nottingham
6th – 8th August 2010

SCHEDULE:

Friday:

09.00 – 10.15 – Registration and Coffee
10.15 – 11.00 – Opening Address Professor Paul Crawford
11.00– 13.00 – Parallel Sessions x 5 (4 speakers with half an hour each)
13.00 – 14.00 – Lunch
14.00 – 15.00 – First Keynote

Kay Redfield Jamison 'The Consequences of Writing a Memoir about Madness' – Charley Baker Chair

15.00 – 15.30 – Coffee
15.30 – 16.30 – Plenary 1

Neil Vickers 'Hilary Mantel and Psychiatry' - Paul Crawford Chair

16.30 – 17.30 – Poster Presentations
18.00 – 20.00 – Drinks Reception

Saturday:

09.00 – 11.00 – Parallel Sessions x 5 (4 speakers with half an hour each)
11.00 – 11.30 – Coffee (Talking Heads film – Gaylan Nazhad)
11.30 – 12.30 – Second Keynote

Elaine Showalter 'The Grand Delusions' – Brian Brown Chair

12.30 – 13.30 – Lunch
13.30 – 14.30 – Plenary 2:

Celia Robertson 'Who Was Sophie?' – My grandmother, Poet and Stranger' Paul Crawford Chair

14.30 – 15.00 – Coffee (Talking Heads film – Gaylan Nazhad)
15.00 – 17.00 – Parallel Sessions x 5 (Each 4 speakers with half an hour each)
19.00 – Conference Dinner and announcing of Poster Prize

Sunday:

09.00 – 11.00 – Parallel Sessions x 4 (4 speakers with half an hour each)
11.00 – 11.30 – Coffee
11.30 – 12.30 – Plenary 3:

Tess Jones 'Another Kind of DNR (Do Not Record): Documentary Films, Patient Rights, and Social Responsibility' - Charley Baker Chair

12.30 – 13.30 – Lunch
13.30 – 14.30 – Plenary 4

Mark A. Radcliffe 'Gabriel's Angel' – Paul Crawford Chair

14.30 – Closing Remarks
14.40 – Visit to Newstead Abbey

Friday 6th August 11.00-13.00

PANEL 1 – Chair: Helen Bralesford

Dr Niall McCrae	The Moon and Madness: Traversing Myth, Metaphysics and Science
Dave R. Wilson	Communication and Storytelling within The Gaze – Description and Meaning
Dr Jose Belda (co-authors Dr Rajesh Atam, Dr Shaun Janki, Dr Gbolahan Otun and Russell White)	Mysticism, Spirituality or Madness? St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross
James Whitehead	Illness narrative and madness narrative: a historical perspective

PANEL 2 – Chair: Victoria Tischler

Dr Allan Beveridge	R.D. Laing and Dostoyevsky
Dr Gavin Miller	R.D. Laing's Literary Tropes
Dr Gary Winship	Murphy 'v' Mr Endon, Beckett 'v' Bion – psychotherapy & chess with a schizophrenic
Dr Rodney X Sharkey	Beckettian Asylum: Unspeakable Home

PANEL 3 – Chair: Charley Baker

Caroline Roe and Anne Garland	'We think by feeling, what is there to know?' – The use of poetry in the construction of meaning in cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy
Scott Fitzpatrick	Composing suicide: Narrative and suicidal behaviour
Dr Jutta Ahlbeck-Rehn	"The strength of our souls and bodies is destroyed, here at the end of the world" On mad writing, isolated women, and giving voice to the historically marginalised
Grace Farrington and Dr David Fearnley	Experiments in reading: finding the middle ground between literature and psychiatry

PANEL 4 – Chair: Anthony Johnson

Dr Reena Kapoor and Dr Chinmoy Gulrajani	Telling the Darkest Tales: Essays and Memoirs in Forensic Psychiatry
Dr Javier Saavedra	The other "I": psychopathology and literature
Dr Caroline Logan	<i>La femme fatale</i> : The Female Psychopath in Literature and Clinical Practice
Dr Christine Montross	"I've Hidden All of Our Knives": A Psychiatrist's Peril in Defining Madness

PANEL 5 – Chair: Brian Brown

Krishnan Unni P.	"Hey, Are You There? I am Knocking!" Autodafes of Fiction and Madness
Dr Jason Lee	Mad Practice / Practically Mad? A presentation of creative writing
Tanya Myers, Stephen Lowe, Justine Schneider, Kezia Scales, Simon Bailey and Joanne Lloyd	Making a Drama: Exploring the potential of partnership between writers and researchers
Mary T. Shannon	My Mother, My Self: Paranoid Schizophrenia and the Literary Mirror of Madness

Friday 6th August – POSTER PRESENTATIONS: 16.30 – 17.30

Dr Alison Convey and Dr Catherine Quarini	"O Fool, I shall go mad!" – Mental Illness in Hamlet and King Lear: a diagnostic review using ICD-10 criteria
Clare Dolman	The Impact of Melville's Manic-Depression on the Writing of <i>Moby Dick</i>
Dr Catherine Quarini and Dr Alison Convey	How can the depiction of psychiatric illness in literature influence public perceptions of such illnesses?
Dr Maureen Donohue-Smith	<i>None But Madmen Know</i> : Understanding Mental Illness through Memoir
Dr Susan Law and Dr Fiona Muir	Narratives as Triggers for Reflection
Anastasia Kucharski	Clinical and Literary Experiences of the Self
Professor Anne Hudson Jones	Mental Illness in the Movies: Report of a Film Series at an American Medical School

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 1 – Chair: Paul Crawford

Sheba D Mani	The grotesque female in Malaysian poems: shaping the migrant's psyche
Dr Michael Mack	Between Literature, Philosophy and Psychiatry: Walter Benjamin reading Hölderlin's "madness"
Isabelle Travis	'Is getting well ever an art / or art a way to get well?': Robert Lowell's Psychiatric Sequences
Professor Alan Beattie	Minds on the run? Metaphors of mobility in the poetry of madness

PANEL 2 – Chair: Brian Brown

Joanne Ella Parsons	Male Starvation as an Expression of Psychological Turmoil: The Tortured Cases of <i>Midwinter</i> and <i>Heathcliff</i>
Sarah Chaney	"A hideous torture on himself": Madness and Self-mutilation in Victorian Literature
Ellie Cope	Furnishing the attic of the mind: Madness, Psychotherapy and Masculine Ideology in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes'
Emy Koopman	Recurring literary tropes and figures as indicators of our deepest fears and fascinations: the case of the sexual predator in gothic fiction

PANEL 3 – Chair: Victoria Tischler

Dr Suzanne Dow	Dora's Daughters: hysteria and the theatre
Dr Sue Atkinson	'A living life, a living death' – Bessie Head's writing as a survival strategy
Saara Jäntti	Homes of the Mad Women? Meanings, Debates and Critical Insights

PANEL 4 – Chair: Laurence Baldwin

Dr Simon Cross	Seeing and Reading Historical Images of Insanity
Taylor Donnelly	The Peripheral Prophet: Narrative Uses of Outdated Medicine
Dr Iain McClure	Madness in Drama
Fred Ribkoff and Paul Tyndall	Williams' Expressionist Dramaturgy of Trauma in <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>

PANEL 5 – Chair: Charley Baker *

Dr Abbas Jahedjah and Dr Leila Rezaei	Mad or lover? Relations between madness and love in a versified Persian story
Dr Leila Rezaei and Dr Abbas Jahedjah	Madness and the role of mad critics in historical Persian tales
Dr Birgit Linder	Trauma and Truth: Representations of Madness in Chinese Literature

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 1 – Chair: Laurence Baldwin

Dr Leigh Wetherall-Dickson	'Of this I know how to speak': Autobiography and Depression in the 18 th Century
Tanka Gagné Tremblay	Genius and madness in literature: migrations and metamorphoses of a paradox
Rachel Blumenthal	Women, Madness, and 19 th Century Life-Writing: The 'Secret' History of American Institutions
Sarah Skoronski	'The devil himself never yet put it into a man's head': Female Madness in Frances Burney's <i>The Wanderer</i>

PANEL 2 – Chair: Paul Crawford *

Professor Johan Anker	The Use of Metaphors in Trauma Fiction
Dr Adam Polnay	Bewilderment and conviction: the portrayal of madness in Michael Ondaatje's <i>Coming Through Slaughter</i>
Dr Imke Pannen	'What will I do?' – Depression and the trick to keep breathing
Dr Jason Lee	Who are you laughing at? Comedy, madness and psychiatry in Will Self's 'fiction'

PANEL 3 – Chair: Brian Brown

Sean Jinks	Mikhail Zoshchenko's Narrative Therapy
Dr Kirsi Tuohela	Narrating One's Own Madness: Mental Illness in Autobiographical text of modernizing Scandinavia
Dr Martina King	From Hysteria to Schizophrenia: Psychopathologic Conceptions in German Literature around 1900
Dr Katie Jones	Writing and Survival in Contemporary French Suicide Narratives

PANEL 4 – Chair: Dave Wilson

Dr Brian Abrams	A Humanistic Perspective on the Discourse of Evidence-Based Practice in the Mental Health Literature: The Case of Psychiatric Music Therapy
Dr Alastair Morgan	Four Trajectories in the Encounter between Philosophy and Madness
Dr Paul Wallang	Wittgenstein's Legacy: Building a philosophical framework of meaning based on narrative through the union of culture, reason and the imagination
Dr Heike Bartel	Infanticide, Madness and the Medea myth

PANEL 5 – Chair: Victoria Tischler

Professor Larry Zaroff	Breathing the Same Air. Cognitive Failure in King Lear and Willie Loman: Clones for teaching the dimensions of dementia to future doctors.
Dr Andrea Capstick	'Confabulation' in late onset dementia: triangulating censored histories through first-person narrative and literary fiction
Dr Angela Woods	Autopathography and the 'Crumbling Twin Pillars' of Kraepelinian Psychiatry
Dr Helen Bralesford	<i>Rainman, Shine and Double Vision</i> : Advancing Representations of Autistic Spectrum through literature, film and cultural text?

Sunday 8th August 09.00 – 11.00

PANEL 1 – Chair: Helen Bralesford

Dr Lars Bernaerts	The figure of the psychiatrist in modern fiction
Erin Sullivan	Looking across the divide: Reading Jean Rhys's <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> in the era of cultural competence
Samantha Walton	Guilty But Insane: Psychiatric Detectives in the 'Golden Age'
Dr Pete Goward	The Gypsy And The Virgin

PANEL 2 – Chair: Anthony Johnson

Gemma Ward	Fictional Accounts of Abnormal Illness Behaviour: Do Lay Writers Get It Right and Do These Accounts Have a Beneficial Value for Clinical Practice?
Dr Carol-Ann Farkas	Why What's in the Wallpaper Matters: Enhancing Health Sciences Students' Understanding of Mental Illness Through the Study of Literature
Professor David H. Flood	Peering Outside the Silo: Portrayals of Mental Disorders and the Education of Healthcare Professionals
Allison Alexander	From Mary Wollstonecraft to Stacey Slater: how stories of mental distress and recovery and be used in learning and teaching to mental health students

PANEL 3 – Chair: Charley Baker *

Mary Elene Wood	'Will they hear and be convinced by my story?' Personal accounts from <i>The Schizophrenia Bulletin</i>
Dr Ian Williams	Autography as Auto-therapy: Psychic Pain and the Graphic Memoir
Katarzyna Szmigiero	Two accounts of one life: Marya Hornbacher's <i>Wasted</i> and <i>Madness</i> in close up

PANEL 4 – Chair: Brian Brown

Noah Moskat	Matter, Method, Malady: The Theme of Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy
Sonja Deschrijver	The Devil in Writing: Malady, Mind and Medicine in Early Modern Spiritual Text and Criminal Trial Proceedings
Dr Rafael Vélez-Núñez	Describing madness in William Davenant's <i>The Rivals</i> (1668)
Mark Ryan	'A vast Spine writh'd in torment': Psycho-physiological influences in William Blake

Please note: Panel chairs marked by * may be subject to change in individual chairing the session

Keynote 1 - Kay Redfield Jamison

Biography

Kay Redfield Jamison is the Dalio Family Professor in Mood Disorders, Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and co-director of the Johns Hopkins Mood Disorders Center. She is also Honorary Professor of English at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. She is co-author of the standard medical text on manic-depressive (bipolar) illness, which was chosen in 1990 as the most outstanding book in biomedical sciences by the American Association of Publishers, and author of *Touched with Fire*, *An Unquiet Mind*, *Night Falls Fast*, and *Exuberance*. Dr. Jamison has written more than 100 scientific articles about mood disorders, suicide, creativity, and lithium. Her memoir, *An Unquiet Mind*, which chronicles her own experience with manic-depressive illness, was cited by several major publications as one of the best books of 1995. It was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for five months and translated into twenty languages. *Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide* was a national bestseller and selected by *The New York Times* as a Notable Book of 1999. *Exuberance: The Passion for Life* was selected by *The Washington Post*, *The Seattle Times*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle* as one of the best books of 2004 and by *Discover* magazine as one of the best science books of the year. Her most recent book is *Nothing Was the Same: A Memoir*. Dr. Jamison is the recipient of numerous national and international scientific awards, including a MacArthur Award.

Title

The Consequences of Writing a Memoir about Madness

Abstract

Writing a memoir is interesting not only for the process involved but for the predictable, and not so predictable, consequences of the public exposure which follows. Writing a memoir about madness, especially if one is a professor of psychiatry, has additional consequences. Responses to the "An Unquiet Mind" were many and complicated. From colleagues, they ranged from compassion and encouragement to criticism and silence. Students, psychologists, and physicians were supportive but deeply skeptical about the professional consequences of seeking psychiatric treatment for themselves or talking openly with their clinical supervisors or professors. Response from the general public ranged from enthusiastic appreciation to religious and political harangues.

Keynote 2 - Elaine Showalter

Biography

Dr. Elaine Showalter is Professor Emeritus of English and Avalon Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University. She has written ten books, including *The Female Malady: Women and Madness in Victorian Culture*, and *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Mass Media*. Showalter has lectured in the United States, Canada, the U.K., and Europe, and her work has been translated into French, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, German, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Portuguese, Danish, Dutch, Czech, Polish, Russian, and Croatian. Since retiring from Princeton in 2003, she divides her time between Washington, D.C. and London, where she frequently appears on radio and television as a cultural commentator on literature, art, theatre, movies, and television. She has written widely for both scholarly journals and such diverse publications as *The Guardian*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Tate Museum Magazine*, *The Lancet*, *Vogue*, and *People*. Showalter has been a judge for the National Book Awards (US), the National Magazine Fiction Awards (US), and the Orange Prize for Fiction (UK), and chaired the Man Booker International Fiction Prize.

Title

The Grand Delusions

Abstract

As information on a wide variety of psychiatric delusions, hallucinations, and syndromes has been provided in the media and in books by Oliver Sacks and others, British and American novelists have become fascinated by the fictional opportunities and the found metaphors these syndromes provide for presenting fictional character. This talk will focus on fiction from the mid-twentieth century (including Evelyn Waugh's *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, Muriel Spark's *The Comforters*, and Shirley Jackson's "The Beautiful Stranger") to the present (including Denis Lehane's *Shutter Island* and Richard Powers's *The Echo-Makers*) which portray protagonists struggling with grand delusions—misidentification syndromes such as Capgras syndrome; auditory hallucinations; and traumatic memory loss and denial. I will be discussing the controversies between psychiatry and neuroscience about these syndromes, asking how they illuminate issues in modern culture, and how they fit into contemporary literary interests in postmodernism, social commentary, and unreliable narrative.

Plenary 1 - Neil Vickers

Biography

Neil Vickers is Reader in English Literature and the Medical Humanities at King's College London and a member of KCL's Centre for the Humanities and Health. He is the author of *Coleridge and the Doctors* (Oxford, 2004) which examines Coleridge's participation in the medical culture of his time. The book's fundamental claim is that Coleridge's intellectual development cannot be understood independently of his medical endeavours. Since then, he has published widely on the links between Romantic literature and the German psychological tradition associated with Karl Philipp Moritz. He has a strong interest in an interest in the history of psychiatry and the history of British psychoanalysis. Recent publications on these subjects include an article on the Kleinian analyst Roger Money-Kyrle and his attempts to merge psychoanalysis, eugenics and anthropology into a single science and on the nature of the psychoanalytic case history. What makes some psychoanalytic case histories 'classics' and how do these differ from other kinds of psychiatric case histories? His plenary lecture on Hilary Mantel grows out of a book he is writing a book on contemporary illness narrative.

Following a BA at Trinity College Dublin, Neil studied at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Université de Paris VII (Jussieu). His M.Phil and D.Phil research - on Coleridge - was carried out at Balliol College, Oxford. Neil was University Lecturer in Romanticism at Cambridge from 1998-2000. He also spent 7 years working as a researcher on the epidemiology of cancer and cancer services.

Title

Hilary Mantel and Psychiatry

Abstract

This lecture considers some of Hilary Mantel's writings on psychiatry. The winner of this year's Mann-Booker Prize (for *Wolf Hall*) and one of the most distinguished novelists writing in English today, Mantel has described her own experiences of being forcibly detained in a psychiatric hospital during the early 1970s following an akithisic reaction to antipsychotic medication. Mantel is sceptical about psychiatry's claims to do any good. She has been sharply critical of expert psychiatric witnesses in courts, arguing that psychiatric interventions are "frequently intrusive and are subject to fads and fashions like other disciplines". At best, she writes, psychiatry can allow us to make metaphors and myths. At worst, it ruins lives. More recently she has suggested that many of the diagnostic categories of contemporary psychiatry are simply means of stigmatizing women's experience. Focusing on Mantel's memoir *Giving Up the Ghost* (2003), and drawing on a wide range of her fiction, I will describe what I take to be Mantel's alternatives to psychiatry. The sense of life that emerges from these works often seems to require the reader to make room for the supernatural. S/he does not have to take the supernatural at face value but the ability to experience life in non-rational, quasi-supernatural terms is highly prized. The lecture will also address the status of childhood and its psychological sequelae in Mantel's writings.

Plenary 2 - Celia Robertson

Biography

Celia Robertson was born in London in 1967 and grew up in Worcestershire. She studied English at King's College, Cambridge, and then taught English as a Foreign Language in Spain for a couple of years before returning to the UK to train as an actor.

She has worked as an actor since 1994. Theatre parts include leading roles in the original productions of *Handbag* (Mark Ravenhill), *Love and Understanding* (Joe Penhall) and *Airsick* (Emma Frost) and TV appearances include *Bad Girls*, *The Bill*, *Eastenders*, *She's Gone* and *The Government Inspector*. *Who Was Sophie?* published by Virago in 2008, is her first book. She lives in South London with her partner and two young daughters.

Title

"Who Was Sophie?" – My grandmother, Poet and Stranger.

Abstract

By the end of her life, Sophie was a social outcast – someone you might have walked past as she sat on a park bench or ignored as she looked for something over and over again in her handbag. She was blown about the streets of Nottingham, a bright but crumpled figure, half frightening, half pitiful. She harangued the officers at police stations, spent her pension on beer and lace, fell out of taxis, fell down stairs.

But this was only one of her several lives.

In the 1930s, she was Joan Adeney Easdale, an exciting teenage poet discovered by Virginia Woolf and published by the Hogarth Press. She lived in the middle of Kent with her mother and brother, wrote an opera for puppets, dreamed of green silk stockings and ate baked apples for breakfast.

In this session, I will try and communicate what my grandmother was like and to outline the key events in her extraordinary story. I will chart the course of the mental illness that blighted her life and at the same time read bits of her work to show what a creative and interesting mind she had – whether as a young girl writing poetry or an old woman writing shopping lists.

Plenary 3 - Therese Jones

Biography

Therese (Tess) Jones, PhD is an associate professor in the Department of Internal Medicine and director of the Arts and Humanities in Healthcare Program in the Center for Bioethics and Humanities. She completed a Ph.D. in English at the University of Colorado, Boulder and a three-year postdoctoral fellowship in medical humanities and ethics at Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. She is editor of the *Journal of Medical Humanities* and is widely published in the areas of literature, film and medical education. In addition to integrating humanities materials and methodologies in the required curriculum of the School of Medicine, she also designs and teaches humanities electives, including "Reel Psychiatry: Cinematic Representations of Mental Illness," "The Doctor-Patient Relationship in Literature and the Arts," and "How To Be Old: Literature, Film and Aging."

Title

Another Kind of DNR (Do Not Record): Documentary Films, Patient Rights, and Social Responsibility

Abstract

Titicut Follies (1967) was the first major documentary by Frederick Wiseman, the most successful independent filmmaker in the United States. Filmed at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution in Bridgewater, a state hospital for the criminally insane, Wiseman believed that public awareness of its terrible conditions would create a demand for reform. He gained unlimited access to the facility by representing the project as educational to staff and administration and used relatively new technology such as high-speed film that enabled shooting in natural light and a directional microphone that picked up even inaudible sounds. The result was a bitterly critical, shockingly brutal documentary account, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts moved immediately to ban its release. *Titicut Follies* became the only American film whose use had court-imposed restrictions for reasons other than obscenity or national security.

If we apply any of the criteria that Gregory Pence uses to specify what he calls "classic cases in medical ethics," cases which have shaped laws, institutions and consciousness, then the complicated production and legal history of *Titicut Follies* would qualify it as a paradigm case in documentary ethics. This presentation will examine issues endemic to the documentary enterprise such as the balance of risks and benefits, the principle of informed consent, the norms of privacy and the question of voyeurism in *Titicut Follies* and more contemporary films such as Lauren Greenfield's *Thin* (2004), Eric Steel's *The Bridge* (2006), and Susan Smiley's *Out of the Shadow* (2006). When the subjects of a film are mentally ill, ensuring their decisional capacity and their individual preferences as well as protecting their privacy becomes especially problematic.

Plenary 4 - Mark A Radcliffe

Biography

Mark A Radcliffe is the author of '*Gabriel's Angel*' published in July by Bluemoose Books. He did the MA in Creative Writing at UEA in 1994 and is a demonstrably slow writer. He has been a columnist with *Nursing Times* magazine for over 12 years and written for various other publications including *The Guardian*, *The British Medical Journal*, *The Idler* and *When Saturday Comes*. He is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at The University of Brighton and a qualified Mental Health Nurse with 12 years clinical experience. He has been the Mental Health Editor and Features Editor at *Nursing Times* magazine and helped establish an alternative professional programme of training at the University of Southampton for Mental Health Practitioners. He is currently writing a novel called '*Giving Head*' about the damage experienced by nurses who have seen or been in too many difficult stories. He lives in Hove with Kate and their 9 year old daughter Maia.

Title

Gabriel's Angel

Abstract

Gabriel Bell is a grumpy 44-year-old web journalist irritated by the accumulating disappointments of life. He and his girlfriend want to start a family but Gabriel has so few sperm he can name them and knit them flippers. So it's IVF, which is expensive. Losing his job was bad enough, but getting run over and waking up to find himself in a therapy group just beneath heaven run by angels makes it the day from hell.

In Gabriel's group are a professional killer and his last victim, as well as the woman driving the car that put him in a coma. From this therapeutic community, they can see the lives of those they have left behind. If they do well in the group, they may be allowed to go back to Earth to finish their lives or pass into heaven. If they do not its Hell. Or worse, more therapy.

Fiction as gentle satire on psychotherapy? In a world where sin is no longer about what we do to other people but rather how we feel about ourselves afterwards how do we know if are doing 'good'?

Reading from '*Gabriel's Angel*' and later from a work in progress that explores the damage done to traumatised or nurses this session will look to gently explore the bridge between writing fiction and 'being' an academic working in Mental Health. Can one legitimately inform the other and if so how can it be helpful? Does trying to combine two activities simply because you happen to do them make you expedient, creative or self indulgent? Or might fiction offer a way of legitimising our enquiry into the darker elements of working with madness?

Film to be shown during Saturday coffee breaks:

Talking Heads by Gaylan Nazhad

Gaylan is an independent filmmaker. He was born in Iraqi Kurdistan and is now based in Nottingham. He has a Masters in filmmaking from the Royal Holloway University of London. He has been influenced by Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky and the Kurdish Novelist Bachtyar Ali.

PANEL SPEAKERS and POSTER PRESENTERS

Friday 6th August 11.00-13.00

PANEL 1 –

Dr Niall McCrae	The Moon and Madness: Traversing Myth, Metaphysics and Science
Dave R. Wilson	Communication and Storytelling within The Gaze – Description and Meaning
Dr Jose Belda (co-authors Dr Rajesh Atam, Dr Shaun Janki, Dr Gbolahan Otun and Russell White)	Mysticism, Spirituality or Madness? St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross
James Whitehead	Illness narrative and madness narrative: a historical perspective

Author

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Title

The Moon and Madness: Traversing Myth, Metaphysics and Science

Abstract

Lunacy, the legendary idea of minds unhinged by the Moon, continues to captivate the popular imagination. Such belief, while violating the assumptions of modern psychiatry, is common among mental health nurses - the profession with most enduring contact with patients. The author describes how the concept of lunar influence has survived the decline of occultism and the expansion of knowledge in physics and physiology; moon lore has been perpetuated in the plays of Shakespeare, the poetry of Milton, the Victorian novels of Dickens, and the lyrics of contemporary rock music.

The concept of lunacy was institutionalised by statutory nomenclature for mental disorder, as in the Lunacy Acts. The asylums of the nineteenth century provided a base for the development of mental science, and psychiatrists rejected popular notions of madness such as the attribution of mental disturbance to the Moon. However, interest in the phenomenon was revived in the 1960s, when psychologists investigated the hypothetical correlation of various behaviours to lunar cycles. While some studies have found a degree of correlation, the evidence is generally unconvincing. Anecdotal observations of a lunar effect are prone to bias, and may be a reaction to the relentless advance of scientific reductionism. However, the author considers the putative mechanisms of a weak effect, which may have been masked by studies of heterogenous samples. Of particular relevance are conditions of cyclicity such as bipolar affective disorder and epilepsy, which have historically been associated with the Moon. Further avenues for research are suggested.

Author

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Title

Communication and Storytelling within The Gaze – Description and Meaning

Abstract

"The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes." Nietzsche

Eye contact, as an encounter between two conscious and self-conscious human beings, appears, at least in literature, to have a remarkable capacity to describe feelings and the meaning-content that structures interpretation (e.g. "The soul that can speak through the eyes, can also kiss with a gaze [Becquer]; "People find out I'm an actress and I see that 'whore' look flicker across their eyes." [Rachel Weisz]; "To any artist, worthy of the name, all in nature is beautiful, because his eyes, fearlessly accepting all exterior truth, read there, as in an open book, all the inner truth." [Rodin]).

Using a wide variety of literatures that either employ, analyse, or seek to identify underpinning philosophical ideas and assumptions about 'The Gaze', this paper will explore and encourage discussion of how language is used to create 'feeling-pictures' that allow us to interpret the meaning(s) of The Other's gaze or glance. For instance, how is that we know what Nietzsche's citation means and what it doesn't mean (i.e. we understand that the madman doesn't actually physically 'pierce' anyone; that we somehow know when, like Weisz, we are on the receiving end of 'that-kind-of-look'; and that we all seem to share an assumption that we can make judgements and decisions about an individual's 'inner truth' or being, based upon the meanings we extract from their outward appearance and, in particular, the perceived quality and content of their eye contact?

Authors

Dr. José Belda, Specialty Registrar Level 6 Trainee in Psychiatry, josebelda@btinternet.com

Dr. Rajesh Atam, Specialty Doctor in Psychiatry

Dr. Shaun Janki, Specialty Registrar Level 6 in Psychiatry

Dr. Gbolahan Otun, Consultant in Addiction Psychiatry

Mr. Russell White, Senior Mental Health Social Worker

(All authors work in North Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)

Title

Mysticism, Spirituality or Madness? St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross

Abstract

St Theresa of Avila was a XVI century Spanish mystic who wrote a vast amount of literature in an attempt to explain her spiritual experiences. She described phenomena which could have been classified as morbid in terms of psychopathology, but the reality proved that she was a very productive person who funded many convents all over the Spanish geography and who defied her contemporaneous ecclesiastical authorities. They were approving of a more relaxed lifestyle than the one she considered should be observed in an enclosed religious life.

Her contemporaneous mystic, also a Spanish saint, St John of the Cross was also a very prolific writer who produced prose and poetry worldwide known and which equally attempted to describe his spiritual experiences and his interaction with God. Indeed, it could be argued that his experiences were compatible with morbid psychopathological phenomena, but his life would indicate that those experiences were not associated with any other symptoms which would point out to an enduring severe mental illness.

The Spanish neurologist García-Albea, published a book aimed at proving that St Theresa suffered from Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Indeed the experiences she described in her literature could have been compatible with such an illness, but this is unlikely.

Freud and Jung also postulated theories in favour and against the mystics' sanity, but this paper will focus on their literature and their description of the experiences. The authors will interpret the latter and try to elucidate their wellness coupling their biographies with their contemplative experiences.

Author

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Title

Illness narrative and madness narrative: a historical perspective

Abstract

While it is certainly true, following Anne Hunsaker Hawkins (*Reconstructing Illness* 1999), that book-length illness narratives became common only in the late twentieth century, in one area it is not quite accurate to claim that they emerge *ex nihilo*, or are very rare before 1950 or even 1900. This area is the narrative description of mental illness; or, in a potentially important distinction, the experience of being treated or confined as mentally ill. Here there is a rich autobiographical tradition going back at least to the late eighteenth-century, known to many scholars via the social history of medicine, and literary studies on the history of the representation of madness—the work of Roy Porter, Michael MacDonald, and Allan Ingram, *inter alios*. However, authors on illness narrative theory have until now not addressed such texts, indeed have found the issue of mental illness narrative generally problematic or avoidable: it is explicitly excluded by Hawkins and G. Thomas Couser (*Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life-writing*, 1997) and silently passed over by several others. The wider chronological field that mental illness narratives cover gives us an opportunity to subject the (sometimes rather ahistorical) conceptual framework already established in the study of illness narrative to a broader historical examination. This paper, then, will be the use some of these texts to investigate the historical variability or indeed validity of universal structural forms in illness narrative, as conceived by existing work.

Friday 6th August 11.00-13.00

PANEL 2 –

Dr Allan Beveridge	R.D. Laing and Dostoyevsky
Dr Gavin Miller	R.D. Laing's Literary Tropes
Dr Gary Winship	Murphy 'v' Mr Endon, Beckett 'v' Bion – psychotherapy & chess with a schizophrenic
Dr Rodney X Sharkey	Beckettian Asylum: Unspeakable Home

Author

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Title

R.D. Laing and Dostoyevsky

Abstract

"After Dostoyevsky one wonders whether philosophy is possible anymore".

So observed R. D. Laing in one of his personal notebooks from the early 1950s. Laing was a passionate admirer of Dostoyevsky. As a young man he had planned to write a biography of the great Russian novelist. He had read all his books, analysed the characters and pondered their dilemmas. He read Dostoyevsky's letters and journalism, and also the major biographies. Laing made copious notes and considered writing an analysis of Dostoyevsky based on the object-relations theories of Fairbairn and Klein. In his second book, *Self and Others*, Laing made extensive reference to Dostoyevsky, and in later works, such as *the Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* and *The Politics of the Family*, he again referred to the Russian writer. Why was Laing so interested in Dostoyevsky? This paper will examine the reasons for Laing's interest and also the similarities in outlook between the two men.

Indeed Laing and Dostoyevsky had much in common. Both were troubled by matters of belief and wrestled with the subject throughout their lives. Both men were perceived by their peers as mentally imbalanced. In his early years, Dostoyevsky was ridiculed by his fellow writers for his excitable and nervous behaviour, while Laing was regarded as a madman by some of his medical colleagues. Both were interested in the extremities of the mind and shared many similar ideas about the nature of insanity. Both Laing and Dostoyevsky objected to the prevailing materialist philosophy of their day and stressed the irreducible uniqueness of the individual.

Author

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Title

R.D. Laing's Literary Tropes

Abstract

In this paper, I go beyond "genealogical" studies of Laing's influence, to give a properly literary analysis of two textual strategies informed by Laing's work.

In The Divided Self (1960), Laing draws upon the theologian Rudolf Bultmann's "demythologizing" hermeneutic in order to argue that seemingly delusional utterances can be understood as naively concrete statements about the patient's own existential position (e.g. a particularly inauthentic individual might claim literally to have had their selfhood stolen). The concomitant literary device is to deploy fantasies and disordered speech that invite a similar, demythologizing hermeneutic. Chief Bromden's insightful fantasies about "the Combine" in Ken Kesey's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962) are cast in this mould, as is the "inner voyage" of the protagonist of Doris Lessing's Briefing for a Descent into Hell (1971).

The second textual strategy that I identify is the conversion/repentance narrative embodied in Laing's controversial account of metanoia, the psychotic's (potential) transformative inner journey. As Laing was aware, metanoia was the original Greek Biblical term later translated into English as "repentance" or "penitence". Accordingly, in both Laing's own writing (e.g. his "autobiography", Wisdom, Madness and Folly (1985)), and in putatively "postmodern" texts such as Alasdair Gray's 1982 Janine (1982), narratives become structured by a discourse of spiritual crisis and recovery – to the extent even, in Gray's novel, of a typographic "breakdown" preceding the protagonist's "salvation".

Author

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Title

Murphy v Mr Endon, Beckett v Bion – psychotherapy & chess with a schizophrenic.

Abstract

This presentation is based on psychobiographical research and re-convenes the psychoanalysis of Samuel Beckett by Wilfred Bion (1934-1936). During the analysis Beckett who was suffering from anxiety and depression, wrote his second novel *Murphy*, an apocryphal tale of a male psychiatric nurse. The novel was based on Beckett's visits to the Bethlem & Maudsley Hospital, and his observation of the male nurses at work. New research (conducted by GW) gleaned from Beckett's nephew and Bion's widow leads to hypothecations about the long term impact of the Bion-Beckett analysis. The analysis was a mutual experience which shaped the later literary output of both men. In this presentation the classic anti-chess match between Murphy and Mr Endon (a male schizophrenic patient who features in the novel) will be digitally replayed (albeit briefly & accompanied by music). Based on Beckett's precise notation of the match it is shown that the match becomes a poignant metaphor for the tragedy and esoteric absurdity of Beckett's later plays (Endon = Endgame) and probably an intriguing metaphor for the process of therapy with Bion. It is argued that the conjoined career writings of Bion and Beckett offer us stark and sublime condensations of depression and psychosis, and the challenges of therapy.

Author

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Title

Beckettian Asylum: Unspeakable home

Abstract

I will argue that Samuel Beckett's literary treatment of asylum spaces involves a paradox wherein asylums are both spaces of internment and security. Beginning with an overview of the prominence of the asylum (as psychiatric institution) in his work, I will speak about the role of Bethlem Royal Hospital (Bedlam) in his first novel, *Murphy* (1934), and the unnamed asylums that pepper his post-war work (1945-1989). I will argue that Beckett's asylum space(s) is to be feared and yet to be sought after (in the sense of 'asylum' as 'safe space'), producing a paradoxical dread and longing that reconfigures the reappearance of the asylum in increasingly spectral, dematerialized forms.

I will then attempt to relate this asylum trope and the corresponding feelings it evokes in Beckett's characters to the following passage as it appears in Beckett's unpublished notebooks while undergoing analysis with Wilfred Ruprecht Bion in London in 1934:

Primal anxiety – affect at which remains operative through life right up to the final separation from the outer world (gradually become a second mother) at death.

Utilizing Otto Rank's notion of "primal anxiety" occurring in individuals as a result of a difficult birth, I will argue that in Beckett's fiction the characters' asylum spaces are displaced womb spaces that simultaneously both protect and entrap. I will then attempt to articulate how institutionalized psychiatric spaces may indeed be materialized manifestations of a very human and recurrent birth/death instinct that revolves around expulsion from the womb.

Friday 6th August 11.00-13.00

PANEL 3 –

Caroline Roe and Anne Garland	'We think by feeling, what is there to know?' – The use of poetry in the construction of meaning in cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy
Scott Fitzpatrick	Composing suicide: Narrative and suicidal behaviour
Dr Jutta Ahlbeck-Rehn	<i>"The strength of our souls and bodies is destroyed, here at the end of the world"</i> On mad writing, isolated women, and giving voice to the historically marginalised
Grace Farrington and Dr David Fearnley	Experiments in reading: finding the middle ground between literature and psychiatry

Authors

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Title

'We think by feeling, what is there to know?' – The use of poetry in the construction of meaning in cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy

Abstract

The Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, offers the following observation on the purpose of poetry: 'Perhaps poetry can articulate ordinary people's feelings and worries and in some small way be a form of consolation or utterance for common humanity'.

This paper is an exploration of the use of poetry as a method for constructing meaning in psychotherapy and how this has shaped and influenced the therapeutic relationship process. This paradigm is explained through a psychotherapy treatment from the perspective of Caroline, the recipient of therapy, and Anne, the therapist.

The paper will begin with a theoretical rationale taken from cognitive science as to how and why poetry may be beneficial as a medium of this communication in therapy. This will be followed by sharing with the audience, each of their individual experiences of the use of poetry and its impact. The paper will conclude with the identification of the shared meaning poetry has constructed in therapy and how this has been of therapeutic benefit.

Author

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Title

Composing suicide: Narrative and suicidal behaviour

Abstract

Contemporary psychiatry's primary concerns with suicidal behaviour have been with its causes and management rather than its meaning. But the world of thoughts, emotions, beliefs and behaviours that form an indelible link between mental illness and suicidal behaviour may not be accessible to, or understandable by the positivist sciences, and may require a broader analysis of the meaning of suicide. Attention to narrative, as the primary method of constructing and conveying meaning, is central to this endeavour. This presentation – the result of an ongoing empirical study – will present the major narrative features of autobiographical reports of persons receiving mental health care following a suicide attempt. I argue that rather than eschewing causal reasoning altogether, narrative accounts adopt a broader approach to causality that recognise an *order of meaning* within each suicidal event that is otherwise obscured under a narrow medical framing of suffering and distress. I contend that narrative may also be used to examine the tension between 'subjective' and 'objective' accounts of suicidal behaviour, and that this may bring into sharp relief the nature of the distinction between 'institutional' and 'individual' suicide and the cultural-normative values implicit in discourses of/perspectives on suicide and the self. The use of narrative frameworks may provide psychiatry with a means for developing a more critical, inclusive, and nuanced knowledge of the meanings of suicidal behaviour and may ultimately challenge the way that contemporary biomedical accounts of mental illness truncate and constrain our understanding of social behaviour, personal experience, illness and identity.

Author

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Title

"The strength of our souls and bodies is destroyed, here at the end of the world" – On mad writing, isolated women, and giving voice to the historically marginalized

Abstract

Whereas there is a great deal of research on the literary and medical representations of madness, narratives produced by those labeled as "insane" have been engaged with far less often. This paper addresses this explicitly by exploring tropes and discourses in hospital archival material including confiscated letters written by Finnish female mental patients in the 1930s and 1940s. In doing so, the paper sets to investigate the theoretical and methodological possibilities of representing and "voicing" marginalized subjects through "the writing mad". The writers in question were deprived of voice regarding their committal to and treatment at the asylum, but also in the psychiatric diagnosis that was ascribed them. At the same time, the women's statements, explanations and expressions – represented in writing where the sane described the insane – were used as medical evidence of their assumed mental disturbance, but disqualified as legitimate knowledge. The letters – the insane describing the sane – stand in stark contrast to this, representing a kind of minor literature that is simultaneously in the margins and in the centre of the more powerful discourses. By combining a genealogical reading – rediscovering subjugated historical narratives – with a micro-historical perspective – preventing subjects from being reduced to anonymous power-effects – the paper aims to incorporate representational practices seen as invalid. By taking "mad writing" seriously, the paper thus traces the voices that were put aside, a story of writing madness from within.

Authors

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Title

Experiments in reading: finding the middle ground between literature and psychiatry

Abstract

Literature in its various forms as poetry, story or novel is potential material for use in medical disciplines, as the practice of bibliotherapy and the growth of the medical humanities in recent decades have demonstrated. However literature is not solely material; it also represents a certain approach, a way of seeing, knowing, perceiving and defining through language that distinguishes it from the approaches of medical and 'psych' disciplines. Or does it? How close do literary narratives come to the anecdotal evidence-base that informs psychiatric understanding? What can these different contextual ways of forming, telling and listening to narratives learn from each other?

This paper will attempt to address such questions using as a case study the experience of facilitating shared reading groups in mental health settings within Mersey Care NHS Trust. Reading groups have been run as an intervention within the Trust since 2007, and this paper marks the first year of a doctoral research project that will test the efficacy of the literary-theoretical foundations for bibliotherapy via current practice in Mersey Care. It will communicate the collaborative perspectives of a doctoral student of literature, and a consultant forensic psychiatrist, Dr. David Fearnley, whose reading group in a high secure unit has recently reached its second anniversary. In the emphasis here on the practice of reading, and the use of literature, the paper will also explore the question of whether there is a method of reading within health settings that carries an optimal benefit for participants.

PANEL 4 –

Dr Reena Kapoor and Dr Chinmoy Gulrajani	Telling the Darkest Tales: Essays and Memoirs in Forensic Psychiatry
Dr Javier Saavedra	The other "I": psychopathology and literature
Dr Caroline Logan	<i>La femme fatale</i> : The Female Psychopath in Literature and Clinical Practice
Dr Christine Montross	"I've Hidden All of Our Knives": A Psychiatrist's Peril in Defining Madness

Authors

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Title

Telling the Darkest Tales: Essays and Memoirs in Forensic Psychiatry

Abstract

- How far can we pursue ideas concerning creativity and madness?
- How might debates about literature and madness influence or be influenced by other disciplines?
- How can literature influence the education and practice of medical, health and allied disciplines?

Within psychiatry, the subspecialty of forensic psychiatry offers one of the richest sources of material for creative writing—tales not just of madness, but also of crime and punishment. From novels to television programs and movies, fictional accounts of mentally ill persons who commit acts of violence are popular with audiences and have become commonplace in our society. Although forensic psychiatrists often serve as consultants to professional writers in these endeavors, they have largely been reticent to follow in the footsteps of acclaimed psychiatrist-authors such as Kay Redfield Jamison, Elissa Ely, and Irvin Yalom by offering first-hand, nonfiction accounts of their experiences. In fact, memoirs and essays published by forensic psychiatrists are extremely rare. In this presentation, we examine the challenges that forensic psychiatrists face when crossing the boundary between medicine and literature by producing works of creative nonfiction about their professional (and sometimes personal) lives. In particular, we examine the impact of inserting a third party—the legal system—into the relationship between the psychiatrist-author and reader. Using our own experiences with writing and publishing personal narratives as a starting point, we explore the limitations of creative writing in forensic psychiatry in the hope of answering the seemingly simple question: Can a practicing forensic psychiatrist write an honest, forthcoming, and meaningful essay?

Author

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Title

The other "I": psychopathology and literature

Abstract

The figure of the "double" or the other "I" is an interesting topic in the history of the literature. A lot of centuries before Jean Paul Richter coined the term "doppelgänger" at the beginning of Romantic Movement in the year 1796, it's possible to find the figure of the double in myths and legends. The issue of the double makes emphasis in the contradictory character of the human being and invokes a sinister dimension of the psychological world, what has been called in German as "Umheimlich". However, does self-multiplicity involve always pathology? Related to this figure in the literature history, a new perspective from clinical psychology called "dialogical self" defines the self as a multi-voice reality. Along the same line, postmodernist psychology considers the self like a discursive construction. Kenneth Gergen utilized the term of "Saturated self" in order to point to the multiplicity of the self in contemporary occidental societies. From these perspectives, the "Self" is situated a long away from the classical essential conception of the self. In this paper, I review briefly some important landmarks of the figure of the double in the literature. Also, I compare the coincidences of the "Double" experiences described in the literature with the experiences of our patients. And finally, I discuss how this literary tradition can help us to understand new psychological theories.

Author

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Title

la femme fatale: The Female Psychopath in Literature and Clinical Practice

Abstract

Literature and legend features many powerful and dangerous female characters – from Aphrodite, Medea, and Hera to Thérèse Raquin in Zola's book of the same name, Phillis Nerdlinger in Cain's *Double Indemnity* and Erika Kohut in Jelinek's *The Piano Teacher*. However, in literature (and in film), it is the male psychopath who dominates – from King Shahryar in *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*, Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Gil-Martin in Hogg's *The Private Memoires and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Bruno Anthony in Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train*, to the real Gary Gilmore in Mailer's *The Executioner's Song*. In forensic clinical practice, research into psychopathy in men also dominates – studies of the nature and treatment of this severe personality disorder in women are very sparse indeed leading to errors in diagnosis and failures in the management of risk, especially towards children. The aims of this paper are to examine why this discrepancy exists and to discuss its implications for the popular understanding of psychopathy in women. The paper will begin with a brief overview of psychopathy and the ways in which men and women actually present with this disorder. Literary representations of the male and female psychopath will then be compared. The paper will conclude with a discussion about why the female psychopath is so frequently misunderstood, misrepresented, and unpopular in print.

Author

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Title

"I've Hidden All of Our Knives": A Psychiatrist's Peril in Defining Madness

Abstract

The mother of an eighteen-month-old boy is admitted to my care after telling the emergency room doctors that she is having constant thoughts of cutting her baby's throat. She has taken all of the knives out of the house, and is avoiding situations in which she and her son are alone together, because she is convinced she will kill him. In making a plan for her care, I know that the woman may be psychotic, and experiencing hallucinations that command her to harm her child. If this is the case, she may at some point be unable to resist the worsening thoughts, and the outcome could be disastrous. However, I also know that patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) may have recurrent and horrifying violent thoughts that they would never act upon. After my evaluation, I feel quite sure that this patient has OCD. The therapeutic treatment for obsessive thoughts such as hers, however, would call for the patient to be left alone repeatedly with her son so that she would see that the child is safe, reinforcing for her that she would not act on her urges. Am I willing to stake the toddler's safety on my fledgling clinical intuition?

Patient by patient, I learn that how one makes a psychiatric diagnosis is subtle, but the consequences of being mistaken are hauntingly real. This creative nonfiction paper will offer a glimpse of this uncertain landscape, and of how it is navigated by a young psychiatrist.

Friday 6th August 11.00-13.00

PANEL 5 –

Krishnan Unni P.	<i>"Hey, Are You There? I am Knocking!"</i> Autodafes of Fiction and Madness
Dr Jason Lee	Mad Practice / Practically Mad? A presentation of creative writing
Tanya Myers, Stephen Lowe, Justine Schneider, Kezia Scales, Simon Bailey and Joanne Lloyd	Making a Drama: Exploring the potential of partnership between writers and researchers
Mary T. Shannon	My Mother, My Self: Paranoid Schizophrenia and the Literary Mirror of Madness

Author

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Title

"Hey, Are You There? I am Knocking!" Autodafes of Fiction and Madness.

Abstract

This paper will look into the tropes of madness created in language as distancing, disfigurement and displacement with the intention that language itself becomes the other undisclosed form of a separate reason not so far theorized or explicated. My fiction *Kerala : A Documenta* will be the case study of this paper to analyze the issues of madness, medicine and language. More than the western oriented theorization of madness, an alternative will be provided here to understand other subject constructions. The subjects discussed in my paper, however, may not be distinctly opposed to the western concept of the subject formation. But a separate attempt will be provided to understand the difficulties involved with these constructions of subjects. The inseparable relationship of language and madness in the fictional writing will be one of the central focuses of this paper. At the same time, this paper will expand the notion of medicine and treatment in the light of some of the philosophical debates centered around body, knowledge and illness. What can be the possible levels of interactions between the act of writing and knowledge of medicine? How do power relations construct a web of changes concerned with the empowerment of medicines upon the patients? Does writing itself indicate an approach to cure or rather is it a way of succumbing to an unresolved riddle of *mis-* recognized constructions of language?. These will be some of the central issues this paper will be focusing in the light of language, madness and medicine.

Author

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Title

Mad Practice/Practically Mad? A presentation of creative writing

Abstract

In this session author and academic Jason Lee (Dr CJP Lee) will offer samples of his creative oeuvre. His novel, *Dr Cipriano's Cell*, concerns a conservative psychiatrist, Dr Cipriano, who works on a ward in contemporary England where Professor Hawthorn will do anything to further his own career. Paranoia is rampant on the ward. Desperately needing a break, at a health farm Dr Cipriano begins a relationship with an ex-patient's partner. Suspicious deaths follow on the ward, and Dr Cipriano's brother is murdered in Cyprus, but then appears in England. Dr Cipriano ends up sectioned on the ward and takes part in Hawthorn's specially devised televised group therapy. *Dr Cipriano's Cell* confronts the binary approaches to pathology concerning the sane and insane, exploding the obsession with power and control which often dominates psychiatric discourse and practice. A Gothic comedy, with powerful psychological insight, *Dr Cipriano's Cell* plunges the depths and corridors of the psychiatric system in true Kafkaesque style.

Authors

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Kezia Scales, Simon Bailey and Joanne Lloyd (University of Nottingham)

Title

Making a Drama: Exploring the potential of partnership between writers and researchers

Abstract

Impact is an objective of much academic research and drama can have an impact far beyond any academic outlet. This is not just because it reaches greater numbers, but it is accessible to a wider range of people and, more importantly, it engages the emotions, not just the mind. We will offer an account of a creative process that began with a research project and led to a script. The commissioners of the research required a 40,000 word report, but the richness of the data demanded further attention. The research team therefore set out to commission a play.

We intend to offer presentations from three perspectives: the research team, the playwright (Tanya Myers) and the Meeting Ground Theatre Company which mediates the relationship, represented by Stephen Lowe. The paper will use a case study to consider practical and philosophical issues including: identifying dramatic potential in qualitative research material, use of research data by a dramatist, different uses of research data in theatre, and practical considerations such as contracts and intellectual property rights. Researchers seeking to disseminate their work to a wide audience may find the discussion informative, and writers may be encouraged to explore the potential of the resources available through academic research.

Author

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Title

My Mother, My Self: Paranoid Schizophrenia and the Literary Mirror of Madness

Abstract

How do we define "madness?" What does "crazy" look like? Growing up with a mother who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, these are the questions I asked myself every time the tall men in dark suits came to take her back to the state mental institution, her carton of Pall Mall's tucked under her arm and a proud look on her face, as if to say, "they'll never win." But after a series of electroshock treatments, that proud look of hers would be replaced with a blank, unblinking stare, leaving no question of who had won.

My memoir, *The Sunday Wishbone*, looks at this form of mental illness from a child's perspective, challenging the notions of madness from a socio-cultural context. The gendered nature of mental illness is also explored, showing how behavioral double-standards and the need for conformity can skew the lens through which we view individual differences, hastening our urge to affix diagnostic labels in order to quell our own discomfort with these differences.

Literature provides a voice for the disenfranchised, a link from one world to another through the power of story. It is through literature that we gain entrance into subjugated knowledge, where new truths and new perspectives are found. And within these new perspectives we broaden our capacity for humility and become better clinicians, better colleagues, better human beings, for it is in the literary mirror of madness where we see more clearly, where suddenly, "crazy" doesn't look so crazy after all.

Friday 6th August - POSTER PRESENTATIONS: 16.30-17.30

Dr Alison Convey and Dr Catherine Quarini	"O Fool, I shall go mad!" – Mental Illness in Hamlet and King Lear: a diagnostic review using ICD-10 criteria
Clare Dolman	The Impact of Melville's Manic-Depression on the Writing of <i>Moby Dick</i>
Dr Catherine Quarini and Dr Alison Convey	How can the depiction of psychiatric illness in literature influence public perceptions of such illnesses?
Dr Maureen Donohue-Smith	<i>None But Madmen Know</i> : Understanding Mental Illness through Memoir
Dr Susan Law and Dr Fiona Muir	Narratives as Triggers for Reflection
Anastasia Kucharski	Clinical and Literary Experiences of the Self
Professor Anne Hudson Jones	Mental Illness in the Movies: Report of a Film Series at an American Medical School

Authors

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Dr Catherine Quarini, Psychiatrist, Warneford Hospital, Oxford, catherinequarini@doctors.org.uk

Poster Title

"O Fool, I shall go mad" - Mental Illness in Hamlet and King Lear: a diagnostic review using the ICD-10 criteria

Abstract

Although psychiatric diagnosis of Shakespearean characters is not new, the characters of Shakespeare's two greatest tragedies were first subjected to formal analysis using modern diagnostic guidelines of the ICD-10 criteria by Convey, 2007. This paper discusses how these criteria apply to *King Lear* and *Hamlet* in assessing the mental state of principal characters: Lear, Poor Tom and Hamlet. The relevance for modern Psychiatry is discussed.

ICD-10

The ICD-10 classification of mental and behavioural disorders is a set of criteria published by WHO, as an international benchmark for diagnosis of psychiatric illness.

King Lear: "Be Kent unmannerly when Lear is mad".

Because Poor Tom is a deliberate "mad" role he may be Shakespeare's most unambiguous attempt to recreate mental illness. Self-harm, psychosis, paranoid delusions, thought insertion, hallucinatory voices and incoherent speech are all vividly described. These symptoms fulfil ICD-10 criteria for schizophrenia (ICD-10-F20). Assessment of King Lear's symptoms indicates an organic disorder (ICD-10-F00-F03).

Hamlet: "What a rogue and peasant slave am I!"

The Prince of Denmark's soliloquies suggest depression, (ICD-10-F32). Hamlet's disgust at his passivity at revenging his murdered father points to psychomotor retardation. The references to suicide in the play are explored. At points Hamlet exhibits the elevated mood, increased talkativeness, decreased sleep and flight of ideas of a manic episode (ICD-10-F30).

Shakespeare in Practice

Shakespeare's plays have been beneficial in clinical practice including performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Broadmoor Hospital. This paper demonstrates that Shakespeare's creations stand up to scrutiny against an internationally recognised classification of disease.

Author

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Poster Title

The Impact of Melville's Manic-Depression on the Writing of *Moby Dick*

Abstract

An increasing amount of scientific evidence suggests that mood disorders are associated with literary creativity. It has been posited by scholars from the disciplines of both psychology and literary biography that Herman Melville should be included in the roll call of great writers who had a mental disorder. This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach to examine the evidence that Melville suffered from manic-depression (otherwise called bipolar disorder).

Textual examples are used to illustrate the influence of Melville's extreme mood swings on the writing of his masterpiece *Moby Dick*, and certain cognitive characteristics of the hypomanic phase of bipolar disorder such as over-inclusiveness, high mental speed and the greater capacity for unusual combinatorial thinking are discussed in relation to the novel. This is further supported by biographical evidence gleaned from contemporaneous sources and the work of biographers such as Andrew Delbanco and psychologist Professor Kay Jamison.

Moby Dick is a work of genius that deserves to be read by all, but its themes hold a special resonance for those of us who have experienced the highs and lows of bipolar disorder and the crisis of identity this condition inevitably engenders. Melville's awareness of his own mood fluctuations and the insight he felt they gave him is central to the complexity and, ultimately, to the enormous appeal of his epic work:

'The intensest light of reason and revelation combined, can not shed such blazonings upon the deeper truths in man, as will sometimes proceed from his own profoundest gloom' (*M-D* 199).

Authors

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Poster Title

How can the depiction of psychiatric illness in literature influence public perceptions of such illnesses?

Abstract

The past 10 years have seen an explosion in the number of 'self-help' books available for conditions ranging from depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and obsessive compulsive disorder. At the same time, many autobiographies have been published, focussing on the mental health problems of both ordinary people and celebrities.

These autobiographies have changed the way in which mental health conditions are viewed by many people, and this is mostly a positive effect, in that readers suffering from the condition feel they are not alone, and readers who have no experience and only prejudices about mental illness are challenged in their assumptions.

However, many of the books are written by people who have suffered genuine mental illness, but perhaps a mild form of a disorder (such as depression), or a single episode of a disorder (such as psychosis) and the distinction between different forms of an illness and therefore different expectations of prognosis is often not made clear, perhaps leaving readers with unrealistic views.

The vast number of self-help books and internet sites available, as well as autobiographical accounts of living with mental illness means that people today have access to a huge amount of information on such conditions. This brings significant benefits to the public's understanding of mental illness, and increasing awareness may be the first step in decreasing stigma. However, there are also drawbacks including reliance on these books for self-diagnosis and the use of therapies recommended in this literature, some of which may be unproven and even dangerous.

Author

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Poster Title

None But Madmen Know: Understanding Mental Illness through Memoir

Abstract

With the immediacy and authenticity of the first person narrative, the mental illness memoir creates a vivid picture of life in the "kingdom of the sick" (Sontag, 1978). However, the impact of being diagnosed with a psychiatric illness is qualitatively different from that of being diagnosed with a physical disorder, and the unique elements of the mental illness experience may be lost when these narratives are subsumed within the larger body of "illness literature."

This presentation has three goals:

- 1) to explore the ways in which the mental illness memoir constitutes a special subset of the illness literature.
- 2) to analyze the applicability of Arthur Frank's categories of illness stories to mental illness memoirs; and,
- 3) to suggest key questions and caveats to be raised in classes or discussion groups in clinical or educational settings.

Examples for this presentation will draw upon a variety of mental illness memoirs (e.g., *The Liar's Club* (Mary Karr), *Madness: A Bipolar Life* (Marya Hornbacher), *An Unquiet Mind* (Kay Redfield Jamieson), *Girl, Interrupted* (Susanna Kaysen), and *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness* (William Styron). *Beautiful Boy* (David Sheff) and *Tweak* (Nick Sheff), dramatically contrasting views of the son's mental illness experience, demonstrate the importance of drawing upon multiple perspectives in understanding the broader impact of mental illness on the individual and their family.

*John Dryden: There is a pleasure sure in being mad which none but madmen know.
The Spanish Friar, Act ii. Sc. 1*

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Poster Title

Narratives as triggers for Reflection

Abstract

In 2009 we developed a 4 week student selected module (SSM), Arts and Health, for second and third year students. This module aimed to facilitate reflection upon the role of the arts (visual, performing and literary) as they related to health care and health care professionals and to build upon the model of patient-centred care promulgated within the curriculum.

One thread within this was the written word. Students were offered the opportunity to read and reflect upon a range of extracts relating to images of doctors, mental health and death and dying. The written word can be a window onto other people's beliefs and understanding. There are without doubt limitations to the personal experience of narrators and such stories can be challenged as biased and anecdotal. However, all "patients" have a personal view of illness and it is these narratives that health professionals listen to and attempt to understand as part of their daily practice.

The narratives chosen for discussion in the area of mental health included dementia, bi-polar disorder and depression. During this SSM, three models of reflection were discussed with the students and they were encouraged to reflect upon each extract using a model of their choice. Reflection was also stimulated by a series of questions used by the facilitator.

Course evaluation suggests that reflection upon and discussion of these narratives enhanced the student experience and made them much more aware of the patient perspective of illness.

Author

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Poster Title

Mental Illness in the Movies: Report of a Film Series at an American Medical School

Abstract

Members of the local Galveston, Texas, community were invited to attend a six-week film series featuring movies about severe mental illnesses, such as clinical depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. After each movie, a psychiatrist and a faculty member or advanced graduate student from the Institute for the Medical Humanities gave brief responses and then began an open discussion with the audience. All screenings were held on the campus of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. The primary goal of this series was to use these carefully chosen films as an innovative kind of community outreach and patient education. As it turned out, the series also attracted medical students and residents, nursing students, allied health science students, and faculty physicians. Substantive conceptual issues included choice and sequencing of the movies, selection of respondents, audience responses, concerns expressed in the general discussions, and recommendations for future series. Tactical challenges include securing rights to show and advertise the movies, attracting a varied audience, responding to complaints about the "inappropriate" content of some of the films, and evaluating the series. Experience with this series demonstrated that popular feature films about mental illness can serve as an effective educational tool not only for the general public and those who have dealt with mental illnesses in their own lives, but also for health professional students and practitioners themselves.

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 1 –

Sheba D Mani	The grotesque female in Malaysian poems: shaping the migrant's psyche
Dr Michael Mack	Between Literature, Philosophy and Psychiatry: Walter Benjamin reading Hölderlin's "madness"
Isabelle Travis	'Is getting well ever an art / or art a way to get well?': Robert Lowell's Psychiatric Sequences
Professor Alan Beattie	Minds on the run? Metaphors of mobility in the poetry of madness

Author

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Title

The grotesque female in Malaysian poems: shaping the migrant's psyche

Abstract

The Malaysian poet, Wong Phui Nam's *Against the Wilderness* (vii) *China bride* and *Variations on a Birthday Theme* (iv) *Kali* illustrate females in terrifying images. These images which appear through spasm of intense emotions and visions of physical distortions are captured through the descriptions of a bride and a mother. Wong chooses to invert and degrade the female body into a grotesque spectacle which appears in terrifying images that snare the senses. The haunting words and expressions in the poems engage feelings of angst and agony. Figures, situations and ideas appear in glimpses as being recognisable, then recoil and perplex the mind with unusual distortions. The suspension between the known and the unknown causes a bewildering reality. Interpreted through the lens of the carnivalesque, specifically, the grotesque body, festive language and parody, I attempt to reconstruct the psyche of the Chinese migrant which underpins these poems. Since the migrant who arrived in Malaya during the colonial era had to face political and social struggles in adapting to a new land, he views himself as a secondary citizen. However, in the poems, he juxtaposes his position to a female and uses the female body as a site of contention to intensify the torment of the psyche and to reflect the despair of the Chinese in Malaysia who, due to a quarrel with his land, which encompasses the society, ideologies and authority, chooses to invert and degrade his body into a grotesque spectacle.

Author

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Title

Between Literature, Philosophy and Psychiatry: Walter Benjamin reading Hölderlin's "madness"

Abstract

This paper explores the problematic nature that characterizes endeavours to define or 'measure' madness. Literature may heighten our awareness of the fluidity that characterizes a rigid opposition between the 'mad' and the 'healthy'. The poetry of the eighteenth century poet Hölderlin questions some elements of such rigid distinction. As Foucault has shown, the eighteenth century was quite concerned with the demarcation and the expulsion of what society may come to define as 'mad'. The paper reads Hölderlin's poetry within this context of expulsion from a given society's conceptions of what constitutes norms and standards. It discusses the correlation between Hölderlin's status as a 'mad' poet and the vision of an inclusive society whose loss and absence his poetry dramatizes. The philosopher W. Benjamin focuses on this sense of loss and absence when he first develops his philosophy of literature in an encounter with Hölderlin's poetry. Benjamin casts Hölderlin's poetry, in particular, and creativity, in general, into a non-normative, non-foundational mode—the detachment of which traverses the trajectory that separates the 'mad' from standards of societal norms. Benjamin insists on poetry as a sphere that cannot be confused with ideology and other forms of political appropriation and yet he equally insists on the social value of such political uselessness. It is this sensitivity to a detached sphere that touches upon the core of our humanity which can easily be confused with the "mad": Hölderlin's poetry dramatizes absence, loss and pain as the ineradicable constitution of our humanity. He thus includes what a narrow conception of society and politics banishes and attempts to eradicate.

Author

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Title

'Is getting well ever an art/ or art a way to get well?': Robert Lowell's Psychiatric Sequences

Abstract

On the publication of Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* in 1959, some critics were shocked by Lowell's use of seemingly frank autobiographical material, in particular the portrayal of his hospitalizations for bipolar disorder. As Lowell's career progressed, he returned several times to the troubled relationship between madness and art, most particularly in his ambivalent attitude to psychiatry and 'getting better'.

Lowell's portrayal of madness was initially framed in the terms of the Freudian family romance and was increasingly influenced by the developments in psychopharmacology of the 1950s and 1960s. The evermore biochemical approach to treating madness downplayed psychoanalysis' privileging of the causal relationship between experience and mental illness, a shift reflected in Lowell's poetry. His early depictions of madness situate it as emblematic of the cultural malaise of 'the tranquilized fifties.' By his final collection, *Day by Day*, published almost twenty years later, mental illness had lost its symbolic power. These late poems reflect the poet's disillusion with the transcendent power of art as a way of representing and remedying suffering. Mental illness has become isolated, and isolating, from the world at large and its cultural-political context.

This paper explores the evolution of psychiatry and psychopharmacology in post-Second World War America, and discusses the relationship of these developments to Lowell's representations of madness and its treatments.

Author

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Title

Minds on the run? Metaphors of mobility in the poetry of madness.

Abstract

In this paper I present a sample of poems (taken from recent anthologies of “survivors’ poetry”) in which ‘metaphors of mobility’ feature prominently (eg flight, escape, wandering, travelling, metamorphosis, transience, fluidity, flux). Drawing on discussions of these poems and their metaphors with 2 contrasting groups of readers - mid-career health professionals (from Mental Health, Rehabilitation and Public Health settings) studying MA/MSc courses; and members of lay self-help groups working on issues of community action for mental health - I will suggest that (at least) 3 distinct meanings of ‘mobility’ can be found in this sample of poetry:

- *‘moving my mind’* (the runaway self?)

fugitive; lost; disoriented; ‘calling back the body’; ‘my mind escapes me’; soar away ‘lines of flight’; being admitted, being confined;

- *‘everything’s changed’* (a runaway world?)

uninvited visitors; child-adult-old age transformations; time, change, flux; oceanic fears; sky over Bedlam

- *‘who says this, saying it’s me?’* (runaway words?)

babytalk, child-babble, nursery rhymes, chants, spells; scrambled language; patchwork texts; residua

I will argue that this line of work raises several questions of wider interest:

1. can literary-linguistic theory (eg Halliday’s social semiotics) illuminate the functions of the metaphors in these poems?
2. might ‘embodied theories of meaning’ clarify links between metaphoric mobility and the phenomenology of madness?
3. do metaphors of mobility in survivors’ poetry provide a test-case for ideas of a ‘post-identitarian self’ and ‘liquid life’ in social theory?
4. how far does such poetry offer a resource for critical/radical practice in mental health work (eg postpsychiatry)?

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 2 -

Joanne Ella Parsons	Male Starvation as an Expression of Psychological Turmoil: The Tortured Cases of Midwinter and Heathcliff
Sarah Chaney	"A hideous torture on himself": Madness and Self-mutilation in Victorian Literature
Ellie Cope	Furnishing the attic of the mind: Madness, Psychotherapy and Masculine Ideology in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes'
Emy Koopman	Recurring literary tropes and figures as indicators of our deepest fears and fascinations: the case of the sexual predator in gothic fiction

Author

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Title

Male Starvation as an Expression of Psychological Turmoil: The Tortured Cases of Midwinter and Heathcliff

Abstract

Recently a number of Victorian literary heroines have been contentiously and retrospectively diagnosed with anorexia, as critics have focussed upon the 'madwoman in the attic' and her displays of disordered eating; this paper now seeks to examine the expression of psychological conditions through male starvation and its connection to contemporary Victorian discourses surrounding psychiatric disorders. In Wilkie Collins's *Armada* (1864-6), Allan Armadale is frequently associated with food which both feminises him and indicates his ignorance of the danger that he is in, and instead it is his dark double, Midwinter, who bears the psychological burden of awareness which is signified by his lack of consumption. This paper will examine how Midwinter's starvation can be seen as symptomatic of his 'nerves' and by considering this alongside Allan Armadale's frequent displays of a hearty appetite it will interrogate how this literary depiction plays into contemporary notions of sanity and insanity displayed via the diet. This paper will also consider Heathcliff's (Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 1847) refusal of food which mirrors the object of his obsession Cathy's threat of deliberate starvation, and how this can be seen as an expression of his tortured psychological condition. This paper will question the extent that starvation is used in the text to symbolise psychiatric breakdown and this will be examined in the light of contemporary medical literature. It will seek to illuminate the gendered differences in perception and meaning that male and female starvation produce in both literary and psychiatric discourses.

Author

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Title

"A hideous torture on himself": Madness and Self-mutilation in Victorian Literature

Abstract

When Arthur Conan Doyle described Alexander Holder (*The Beryl Coronet*, 1892), who plucked his hair and beat his head against the wall, as "like one who has been driven to the limits of his reason" he was not only playing on literary stereotypes of grief and despair, but also new psychological theories of abnormal behaviour, connected to changing medical and popular ideas of "the self" and "the will."

The most dramatic illustration of these concepts was found in psychiatric literature on self-mutilation, in *The Journal of Mental Science* (1880s) and Daniel Hack Tuke's *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine* (1892), as well as asylum case notes. In this paper, I will introduce, through these sources, under-researched nineteenth century medical definitions of self-mutilation. In contrast to the modern focus on cutting, these are dominated by hair-plucking, skin-picking and head-banging. With psychology not yet a distinct discipline, I argue that these theories can only be fully understood in the context of a mutual shaping with fictional literature.

Beginning with the influence of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) on psychological ideas, I will then highlight the way medical theories infiltrated wider discourse in the later nineteenth century, in Doyle and Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893). Finally, I will demonstrate the way key themes in Hawthorne, including the moral (specifically sexual) context of self-mutilation, remained apparent in medicine and literature, but with an increasing emphasis on the social and political importance of emotional balance, with self-mutilation a dramatic example of pathological loss of self-control.

Author

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Title

Furnishing the attic of the mind: Madness, Psychotherapy and Masculine Ideology in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes'

Abstract

When Sherlock Holmes declares to Doctor Watson at the beginning of *A Study in Scarlet* that 'I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose', the detective challenges the fixity of the mind to present selfhood as a mutable and volatile construction, reflecting the Victorian fascination with accessing the covert realms of the human psyche. The classification, diagnosis and treatment of insanity underwent a radical transformation towards the end of the nineteenth-century, while male identity remained fiercely moderated by normative ideals of logic, strength and reason. Experiences of madness, however, are portrayed within late-Victorian fiction as subversive and dissonant states that enabled the man to resist cultural regulation and to dramatise alternative ideologies of selfhood. The paper will demonstrate how the early 'Sherlock Holmes' stories engage with contemporary psychological texts and emerging psychoanalytic theories to portray an eclectic variety of mad male experiences in the forms of hysteria, criminal insanity and drug addiction. It will examine how pathological masculinities are constructed through physical symptoms of disfigurement and disguise, and consider how the detective performs the role of analyst by incorporating therapeutic practices such as the talking cure in his investigations. It will challenge Holmes's position as the rational archaeologist who unravels the narrative of the criminal madman, and consider the detective as a compulsive monomaniac whose own "madness" provides a device for constructing an alternative identity that both subverts and surmounts institutional authorship.

Author

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Title

Recurring literary tropes and figures as indicators of our deepest fears and fascinations: The case of the sexual predator in gothic fiction

Abstract

Within the humanities, there has been a long dispute on whether and how literary scholarship can shed light on the human psyche. Efforts to combine psychology and literary studies often lead to either empirical (reader response) research or to analyses of 'the representation of [some mental quality] in literature.' Both of these approaches have their disadvantages: reader response studies have to reduce the complexity of both texts and readers, while literary analysis, insofar as it follows poststructuralist theory, stresses the complexity of the text to the extent that any reference to a 'common' meaning of the text is deemed naive. Given these incompatibilities, what could be an alternative possibility for getting to know 'the human mind' through literature? For those who still believe to some extent in traditional humanism, literature is the main way to access the minds of those belonging to other times and places. Literature has shown and will continue to show us what people are capable of imagining through language. In this presentation, I would like to discuss whether and how the comparative literary enterprise of analyzing recurring literary tropes and figures can give us psychological insight into human needs and desires, within as well as beyond the specific socio-historical background of the text. The main example I would like to use is the figure of the sexual predator, following this figure in Gothic fiction from Ann Radcliffe to Poppy Z. Brite and explaining its significance by drawing on the theoretical work of anthropological philosopher Georges Bataille.

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 3 -

Dr Suzanne Dow	Dora's Daughters: hysteria and the theatre
Dr Sue Atkinson	'A living life, a living death' – Bessie Head's writing as a survival strategy
Saara Jäntti	Homes of the Mad Women? Meanings, Debates and Critical Insights

Author

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Title

Dora's Daughters: hysteria and the theatre

Abstract

This paper looks at the representation of hysteria in twentieth-century dramatic texts by women – notably Sarah Kane's *4:48 Psychosis* – from a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective.

The term 'hysteria' has, largely due to feminist critiques of Freud and the cognitivist turn in the contemporary clinic, fallen out of usage, in favour of the (equally contested) 'borderline personality disorder'. Not so in the contemporary Lacanian clinic, where hysteria remains a recognized psychical structure, albeit founded upon Lacan's critique of Freud's case history of Dora. Here, hysteria consists in a relentless push for knowledge about femininity which enslaves the hysteric to an (endlessly disappointing) master.

This paper draws on Lacanian re-readings of Dora as well as work by feminist critics in order to suggest what the contemporary 'psy' professions might have to gain from an engagement with the literary. Kane, it will be argued, points towards a knowledge on hysterical suffering of which (following Lacan) the hysteric herself is the repository, but where this suffering persists due to the master-clinician's failure to produce a reading thereof. It is this failed act of reading that sustains the hysteric's 'theatre' of the symptom and condemns her to speak through her body. *4:48 Psychosis* is read here as the staging of this hysterical demand addressed to the Other, where both the black humour and the tragic *dénouement* attest to the 'illiteracy' of the profoundly normative contemporary psychiatry. It is the Lacanian clinic, with its defence of the singularity of the subject, that is uniquely placed to refuse the hysteric's demand for spectatorship and to assume the place of reader.

Author

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Title

'A living life, a living death' – Bessie Head's writing as a survival strategy

Abstract

This paper explores the work of the South African writer Bessie Head as a survival strategy. By transforming her personal experience into a hybrid, autobiographical form of imaginative literature, she was able to give meaning and purpose to a life lived under permanent threat of extinction from the dominant groups and structures surrounding her. Such threats included the destructive effect of the many fixed labels imposed upon her: she was born in a mental institution in 1939, the daughter of a white woman designated 'mad' and an unknown African father; she herself came to be labelled a 'psychotic', an exile, a 'Coloured' woman, a 'tragic black woman', a 'Third World woman writer'.

Bessie Head's endeavours to defeat and surmount such limited and static definitions, and her attempts to create a sense of identity acceptable to herself produced work characterized by contradiction and paradox. Through her writing, she asserted her right to survive by establishing, like Makhaya in 'When Rain Clouds Gather', a 'living life' in place of the 'living death that a man (sic) could be born into (136 RC).

I have drawn on a combination of Bessie Head's unpublished letters and papers, her published writings, and relevant critical works in order to show how her writing was the mediating agent which facilitated her survival and enabled her to transcend the power structures which influenced her life and her sense of self. As she said in the last year of her life, with bitter understatement, 'I am no failure' (20.2.1986 KMM BHP).

Author

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Title

Homes of the Mad Women? Meanings, Debates, Critical Insights

Abstract

This paper presents some results of my PhD research on the meanings of home in women's autobiographical accounts on madness. It challenges the discursive aetiology that long prevailed in feminist literary and cultural studies according to which, to put it simplistically, it is women's restricted role in society and confinement at home that drives them mad. While this insight has provided a crucial critical basis for the examination of the cultural constructedness of women's madness, the discussion has largely neglected the importance of home as a site of positive and/or political identity construction. Recent feminist theorisations of home, however, present it as a multifaceted and complicated site of everyday life and meaning making.

My analysis of Janet Frame's *Faces in the Water* (1961), Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* (1973) and Lauren Slater's *Prozac Diary* (1998) points out how the historically and culturally varying psychiatric practices, gender roles and discourses contribute to the construction of the meaning of home to the mad protagonists. It thus provides insights into the lived – spatial, bodily, social and emotional – realities of psychiatrically treated women and their ways of telling about it, for home is not only a material place, but a metaphor through which the experience of illness can be structured and narrated. Home thus proves to be a critical, material and symbolic intersection of philosophical, literary and psychiatric practices and debates.

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 4 –

Dr Simon Cross	Seeing and Reading Historical Images of Insanity
Taylor Donnelly	The Peripheral Prophet: Narrative Uses of Outdated Medicine
Dr Iain McClure	Madness in Drama
Fred Ribkoff and Paul Tyndall	Williams' Expressionist Dramaturgy of Trauma in <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>

Author

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Title

Seeing and Reading Historical Images of Insanity

Abstract

In this paper I introduce an analytic strategy for reading historical images of madness that enables us to see that while forms and figures of madness change there are threads of continuity. Indeed, my argument is that we can only understand continuity in the visual image of madness in relation to change. I then use this argument to show that how continuities and changes are read into historical images of madness depend on three interconnecting factors. They are: media technologies, cultural forms, and historical consciousness. In the nineteenth century, these factors interconnected in visually significant ways when the development of photography and a changing pictorial aesthetic of madness fused with new theories of mental disorder. Through close analysis of three exemplary, historical forms of representations of madness, i.e. clinical photographs, lithograph engravings, and portraiture in oils, I show how they produce certain constructions of madness, with different truth-claims and forms of visual rhetoric being involved, each with attendant consequences for certain historically-based epistemological positions.

Author

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Title

The Peripheral Prophet: Narrative Uses of Outdated Medicine

Abstract

"Much madness is divinest sense," wrote Emily Dickinson in 1863. This trope of a higher truth in madness is part of a paradigm that our favored medical models have largely eradicated, at least in everyday life. Yet even in the 20th Century, when "madness" is "mental illness" and our thinking about it profoundly shaped by the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, and neurology, the association of madness and prophesy remains a key construct in literary texts. Fiction retains its use for the out-of-date conception of the insane truth-teller. These divinely sensible characters are invariably foils within the narrative; their peripheral status allows their insights greater relevance and clarity for the "A"-plot and its A-list characters. These prophets shape interpretation while remaining themselves static and symbolic, working as what Mitchell and Snyder would call a narrative prosthesis.

In this essay, I intend to explore a number of 20th century texts that use madness in such a way. The essay would include texts from such writers as Virginia Woolf, Tennessee Williams, and Toni Morrison, with a particular emphasis on Richard Yates's 1961 novel *Revolutionary Road* and its recent film adaptation. My key questions are: how has this literary idea been shaped, even perhaps encouraged, by the psychiatric discipline itself? How does the presence of diagnosis influence our reading of critique? And how, in the age of disability studies, can such reductive, pre-determined uses of madness be recovered and reclaimed, without surrendering the mind entirely to medicine?

Author

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Title

Madness in Drama

Abstract

This talk will outline basic definitions (drama, madness etc) and goes on to explore some basic themes connected to the presentation of madness in drama. It will explore how different kinds of madness (e.g. neurotic and psychotic) have led to different dramatic realisations. It will conclude that madness is one of the driving forces of all drama and postulate why this might be. Throughout, the talk will consider examples of different plays from western literature over the last two thousand years.

Authors

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Title

Williams' Expressionist Dramaturgy of Trauma in *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Abstract

Critics of Tennessee Williams' plays have drawn from a variety of psychological approaches, but to date none of them has used trauma theory in any sustained way to explore his work. This paper uses trauma theory to unearth the dramatic impact and staying power of Tennessee Williams' classic American play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In fact, it claims that Williams' staging of trauma and the post-traumatic accounts for the play's continuing resonance with audiences. More specifically, the paper analyzes the ways in which the combination of shame, guilt, homophobia, and, more generally, the denial of trauma and the taboo generate a dialectic of trauma, defined by Judith Herman as "the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud" (*Trauma and Recovery*, 1). This struggle is most evident in the character of Blanche, whose inner conflicts dominate the stage, but it can also be discerned in the larger community surrounding her, specifically the characters of Stella, Stanley, Mitch and Eunice. Williams gives concrete form to the dialectic of trauma by staging Blanche's post-traumatic memory and sensory experience through the use of lighting, set design, sound, music, and all of the resources of theatre. Given our emphasis on Williams' expressionist dramaturgy of trauma, we will illustrate our reading of the play with excerpts from Elia Kazan's 1951 film adaptation of the play.

Saturday 7th August 09.00-11.00

PANEL 5 –

Dr Abbas Jahedjah and Dr Leila Rezaei	Mad or lover? Relations between madness and love in a versified Persian story
Dr Leila Rezaei and Dr Abbas Jahedjah	Madness and the role of mad critics in historical Persian tales
Dr Birgit Linder	Trauma and Truth: Representations of Madness in Chinese Literature

Authors

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Title

Mad or lover? Relations between madness and love in a versified Persian story

Abstract

Versified Persian stories – often derived of Arab or Indian literature- composed by 11th to 18th centuries in Iran, were mostly amorously. The names of these stories are, most of the time, a phrase composed of lover and the beloved one's names. But there is an Arabic story, translated to Persian and composed by several poets in different centuries, well-known with an adjective of lover: mad.

"leili and Majnoon" is one of the most famous Persian versified loving stories. "Majnoon" in Arabic language is an adjective, means someone who missed his brain or someone his brain has been hidden; synonym of mad in English.

This character has been called mad or "Majnoon" because of his abnormal and unusual behaviors. His manner, opposed age's wisdom, took his roots from mental disorder created by strong loving emotions. This adjective – Majnoon or mad- has been used by many poets in classic Persian literary history for presenting lovers; so today, followed of this versified story, "mad" in Persian literature and Persian language is a synonym of lover.

This article will study unusual manner of lover in "Leili and Majnoon" story for analyzing Majnoon's abnormal acts. Also we study in this essay vague usage of this adjective "Majnoon" as synonym of mad in Persian literature.

Authors

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Title

Madness and the role of mad critics in historical Persian tales

Abstract

In recent centuries madness has been recognized as a kind of mental disorder that influences person's life; contrary to the ancient world that mostly didn't consider insanes as other patients; so related them to magic and unknown world or ridiculed them as clowns.

But doubtlessly it must to make some exceptions in the roles and appearances of mad persons in this long period; such as several historical Persian tales belonged to ancient Persian literature – Islamic period- in prose or verse. In spite of the fact that there were many dictator kings in Iranian historical past who didn't allow freedom of speech inside and outside of their courts, we find the critics that, at times, reminded the king some social or political problems; such as politic men who proposed their critical points of view indirectly and conservativenessly, or devouts and sufis who – supported by belief force - objected kings fearlessly.

On the basis of some Persian historical tales, we find in the king's courts mad characters who took the role of informed critics such as Bohlul in Arab court in Baghdad or Talhak (Talkhak) in Persian palaces. These characters, known as mad but indeed genius, caused king to laugh and played the role of clowns for amusing him. But there are many critical points in their comical speeches criticizing injustices and oppressions created by king dictatorial government. So we find a social and critical use of madness in Islamic history of Iran appeared in monarchies governed Iran in long centuries.

In this article we analyze the relations of madness and social and political criticism in the history of Islamic royal governments and we present famous mad characters in Persian tales and the critical points of their speeches.

Author

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Title

Trauma and Truth: Representations of Madness in Chinese Literature

Abstract

Representations of madness have nourished literature from antiquity, and it has been looked upon as divine, inspired, and insightful, but also as aberrant, inhuman and irrational. Madness always represents an alienation from the kind of reason language can express and it is often used by writers to show how the dominant values of a culture can be irreconcilable with the individual's personal life and convictions. With only a few exceptions, however, the literary theme of madness has long been a domain of Western cultural studies. While much of Western writing represents madness as creative genius, as a result of religious guilt and trauma, as romantic subjectivity, and as a psycholinguistic concern, the Chinese tradition is defined by feigned madness, madness as a symbol of the traumatic, and madness as a voice of social truth.

This presentation looks at the various ways in which 20th century Chinese writers and poets use madness and mental illness as a voice of social insight and as a symbol of the alienated mind in a time of tremendous social and cultural change.

The focus will be on the representation of historical and personal trauma in the fiction of Lu Xun, Yu Hua, Zhou Daxin, Ha Jin and the poet Indexfinger. Each writer comments on a different historical event in 20th century China while at the same time shedding light on the intersections between literature, psychiatry, and philosophy. They reflect a paradigm shift from social alienation to self-alienation and from paranoia to psychosis.

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 1 –

Dr Leigh Wetherall-Dickson	'Of this I know how to speak': Autobiography and Depression in the 18 th Century
Tanka Gagné Tremblay	Genius and madness in literature: migrations and metamorphoses of a paradox
Rachel Blumenthal	Women, Madness, and 19 th Century Life-Writing: The 'Secret' History of American Institutions
Sarah Skoronski	'The devil himself never yet put it into a man's head': Female Madness in Frances Burney's <i>The Wanderer</i>

Author

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Title

'Of this I know how to speak': Autobiography and Depression in the 18th Century

Abstract

The condition of melancholy has long been recognised by scholars as a physical disease, a mental disposition and as a potentially perilous spiritual condition in western European history. It was a central cultural idea that focused, explained and organised the way people viewed the world, their place in it and their relationships with each other and themselves. It was a term that had subtle nuances within social, medical, religious and philosophical discourse. This subtlety has been replaced today with the single and sterile term of depression that focuses upon a set of external symptoms that reclassifies human experience as an abnormal medical condition that can be rectified with the consumption of medication, a course of therapy that aims to readjust the individual, or confinement. My work explores the ways that depression was identified, experienced and described from the inside, before the term depression became the diagnostic term for a cluster of symptoms in the nineteenth century. By studying autobiographical accounts of mental disorder, I aim to illustrate the impact of the depressive experience upon the individual's sense of self, as the narratives offer a meaningful insight into the subjective experience of this inverted state, providing an authenticity that can only be born from actual experience as far as the writer understands it.

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Title

Genius and madness in literature: migrations and metamorphoses of a paradox

Abstract

The links between genius, madness and artistic creativity is a long-standing issue. In Antiquity, Aristotle deals with the question in his famous *Problem XXX*, so-called *The Man of Genius and Melancholy*, and asks: why are outstanding men so melancholy? Already, the idea of a sort of melancholy, a pensive sadness inherent to the figure of the artist takes shape. That same artistic nostalgia we will find again in Renaissance and in the romantic spleen. Diderot takes over and then makes of the proximity of genius and madness a commonplace. It will not escape the attention of the pioneers of alienism and psychiatry in the nineteenth century. The idea that genius is close to madness, that beings out of the ordinary are inhabited by a kind of madness is a widely spread idea, both in the scientific and literary cultures. The Creator is an eccentric, atypical, unstable, awkward character, obsessed with work and, to the limit, nearly mad. With regard to common fate, the crossroads toward correlative notions between scientific and literary discourses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, completed and competed by others, constitute a particularly remarkable curiosity. The aim of the paper suggested is to report on these interactions and to show the migrations and the metamorphoses of literary genius and madness in both scientific and literary fields. To reach this objective, two corpuses will be taken into account: on the one hand, an essay addressing the issue with literary critics and intellectuals like Oskar Panizza (*Genius and Madness*, 1891) and Raymond Queneau (*Understanding the Madness*, written around 1930); on the other hand, various essays written by alienists and "madness specialists" like Cesare Lombroso (*The Man of Genius*, 1877) and Max Nordau (*Degeneration*, 1892).

Author

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Title

Women, Madness, and 19th-Century Life-Writing: The 'Secret' History of American Institutions

Abstract

When Clarissa Lathrop writes in her asylum narrative, "To you, my friends, I reveal my heart and history," she reorganizes the notion of "history" to include the heart-felt, autobiographical, and psychiatric views of the public institutions that she scrutinizes in her text. My paper, which is extracted from a larger project, considers two asylum narratives, Lathrop's *Secret Institution* (1890) and Lydia Smith's *Behind the Scenes, or, Life in an Insane Asylum* (1878), as anti-Enlightenment counter-histories (to borrow Foucault's phrase) of American medicine and politics. These authors use the rhetoric of the American Revolution to foreground their own medical captivity as a national problem, and, more significantly, they read and revise major historical events (the assassination of President James A. Garfield, for example) through the lens of psychiatric medicine.

I read these asylum narratives alongside Elizabeth Keckley's slave narrative, *Behind the Scenes in the Lincoln White House* (1868), and Sarah Wakefield's Indian captivity narrative, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* (1864), in order to place them within a broader tradition of American captivity narratives. Keckley offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the presidency that focuses not on Abraham Lincoln, but on his mentally ailing wife, Mary Todd Lincoln. Wakefield deploys the rhetoric of hysteria and madness to revise the legal and military archive of Dakota Indian-Minnesota relations. By considering asylum narratives in tandem with other women's life-writings of madness, my paper reorients the canon of American captivity narrative along the coordinates of madness and psychiatry. I ultimately argue that women writers in the 19th century mobilize the trope of madness in their autobiographical narratives in order to produce counter-histories of major American institutions ranging from medical hospitals to the White House.

Author

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Title

'The devil himself never yet put it into a man's head': Female Madness in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*

Abstract

During eighteenth century, professional disciplines were not as discrete as they are today. England's relatively small literate community consumed treatises written by eminent physicians while medical men perused novels by popular authors. As such, writers of these two genres inevitably influenced one another; eighteenth-century novelists were thus in the unique position of assisting in the establishment of a discourse that ultimately became integral to a scientific discipline, that of psychiatry. Coupled with the creation of what eventually becomes psychiatric discourse in the early nineteenth century is the revelation that the categories that help to define types of madness are often gendered. In her final novel, *The Wanderer* (1814), the immensely popular novelist Frances Burney writes Elinor, a character whose transgressive behaviours constantly contravene the boundaries set out for genteel young Englishwomen. Her erratic activities stand in stark contrast to those of Juliet, the exemplary female protagonist whose actions are appropriately feminine and contained. As we move through the narrative it becomes increasingly apparent that Elinor's bizarre threats to Juliet signal perversions of masculine characteristics rather than the successful assumption of masculinity. This paper will examine Elinor's 'madness' and will consider how the medicalized language used to 'diagnose' her peculiar conduct operates within the text. It also will compare the discourse of madness used by Burney to William Pargeter's *Observations on Maniacal Disorders* (1792) in order to consider how these two genres of texts influenced one another sufficiently to eventually develop a language to be used in the discipline of psychiatry.

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 2 –

Professor Johan Anker	The Use of Metaphors in Trauma Fiction
Dr Adam Polnay	Bewilderment and conviction: the portrayal of madness in Michael Ondaatje's <i>Coming Through Slaughter</i>
Dr Imke Pannen	'What will I do?' – Depression and the trick to keep breathing
Dr Jason Lee	Who are you laughing at? Comedy, madness and psychiatry in Will Self's 'fiction'

Author

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Title

The Use of Metaphors in Trauma Fiction

Abstract

This paper will add to the recent interdisciplinary discourse between psychiatry, trauma theory and narrative by discussing the description and use of traumatic experiences in works like *Fugitive Pieces* (1997) and *The Winter Vault* (2009) by Anne Michaels, *Country of My Skull* by Antjie Krog (1998), and *Falling Man* by Don de Lillo (2005)

The paper focuses on the role of metaphor in the description and memory of trauma, while comparing the work of, inter alia, Cathy Caruth, Onno van der Kolk, Margaret Wilkinson, Jaques Derrida and Lacan about the interplay of trauma, narrative and memory.

The recent neurobiological research in the working of the brain during trauma and the research of Borbely and Modell in the role of metaphor during therapy are discussed in conjunction with the application thereof in literature.

The influence of insights into trauma in the narrative structure of different literary works is discussed with the goal to demonstrate the theoretical, heuristic and hermeneutic value of trauma in those works. During this discourse criticism against certain works and especially the use of metaphors in these trauma narratives is addressed.

The use of metaphor is seen as one possible way of saying the inexpressible, facilitating the emergence of memory and the integrated working-together of the two hemispheres of the brain, a characteristic of trauma narrative and fiction, and even a sign of progression in the working through of trauma.

Author

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Title

Bewilderment and conviction: the portrayal of madness in Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*

AbstractBackground context

The scraps of historical data that exist about Buddy Bolden - a cornet player from New Orleans who influenced early jazz - have evoked curiosity in a wide range of writers, including psychiatrists. The reason for the latter is that Bolden 'went berserk in a parade' aged 31, and spent the rest of his life in an asylum.

This paper is about the novel *Coming Through Slaughter* by Michael Ondaatje, which is based on Bolden's life. The paper examines the form of the narrative when it portrays Bolden, particularly in the scenes when he appears to be mad.

Main themes

I discuss how aspects of the form of the text - including its refusal of coherence - convey both the bewilderment and the conviction of Bolden's experience, and leave the reader experiencing something of this. This is discussed for the earlier, more chaotic parts of the Bolden's life, and the later years spent in the asylum in the 'desert of facts.'

Summary of the main conclusions

This paper argues that this text's imaginative reconstruction of a man's life resonates with 'taking a history' in psychiatry, and discusses how the novel helps with empathy into the experience of psychosis.

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Title

'What will I do?' - Depression and the trick to keep breathing

Abstract

The Trick is to Keep Breathing by the Scottish writer Janice Galloway, published in 1989, deals with a female drama teacher whose life becomes dominated by her increasing depressive unipolar mental disorder. It is written from the perspective of the first-person narrator, paradoxically named Joy, who is suffering from diverse psychologically problematic situations in life, among them the death of her lover that lead her to clinical depression and let her face psychiatric treatment.

Coping with life becomes increasingly difficult for the protagonist and she retreats inwardly, mourns for her dead lover, withdraws from her family and alienates from society, develops anorexia, and destroys her life which she sees as litter. The plot is told in an unconventional, partly self-ironic, witty tone, but with a poetic yet compassionate psychological realism. The heroine Joy in the end settles on the trick to just keep existing, and trying to keep herself occupied.

In a postmodern way, Galloway unconventionally plays with printed fonts, disjointed aspects of speech, written journal entries, and fragmented typography to present the heroine's deteriorating mental state.

This talk would like to deliver aspects of the literary presentation of depression, follow examples of the heroine's psychological deterioration and show how the novel presents the mental disorder through the first-person narrator's perspective, how it explores the patient-psychiatrist relationship, and how it depicts the extremities of depressive human emotions.

Author

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Title

Who you laughing at? Comedy, madness and psychiatry in Will Self's 'fiction'.

Abstract

According to J.G. Ballard, Will Self is one of those rare writers whose imaginations change for ever the way we see the world. This paper examines comedy, madness and psychiatry, in Will Self's fiction. Five works by Will Self, including short stories and novels, contain the comical psychiatrist Dr Zack Busner. In this paper, Busner's contribution to the world will be exposed. A charismatic egotistical healer, Busner can be read as a blend of a number of real life figures, including controversial psychiatrist R.D. Laing, and even possibly best selling author and neurologist Oliver Sacks. Questions concerning fictions relationship with 'reality' are enormous and ongoing, and a good case can be made for all 'reality' being fiction, and vice versa. With regards to Will Self's *The Quantity Theory of Insanity*, Doris Lessing has explained, he offers a 'mirror of what we are living in – and wish we didn't'. Elements of this will be explained in relation to Self's dark humour. The so-called 'mad' are often figures of fun, and what are the ethics of laughing at the 'afflicted'? We also have the 'mad' scientist, and Will Self continually subverts conventions, with psychiatry being pinpointed as often the most ludicrous activity. At every opportunity Self seeks to challenge our perceptions and conventions. How does he go about this, and is he successful? Is laughter the best cure? And are you only ever laughing, deep down, at yourself? Who you laughing at?

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 3 –

Sean Jinks	Mikhail Zoshchenko's Narrative Therapy
Dr Kirsi Tuohela	Narrating One's Own Madness: Mental Illness in Autobiographical text of modernizing Scandinavia
Dr Martina King	From Hysteria to Schizophrenia: Psychopathologic Conceptions in German Literature around 1900
Dr Katie Jones	Writing and Survival in Contemporary French Suicide Narratives

Author

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Title

Mikhail Zoshchenko's Narrative Therapy

Abstract

Mikhail Zoshchenko (1894-1958), although more renowned as a Soviet satirist, also produced important serious literary works later in his career in which he explicitly addressed issues of mental health. Through these works he increasingly came to analyse aspects of his own mental sufferings, culminating in a detailed account of his process of literary auto-therapy. This paper will analyse the textual strategies that underpin the therapeutic aspect of these works with a view to offering insight into how the literary act can yield important subjective truths about mental suffering with possible therapeutic implications beyond the Soviet setting.

The paper will further try to suggest that an important part of this therapeutic ambition was Zoshchenko's tentative attempt to articulate a language of mental suffering that was both appropriate to Soviet cultural possibilities, yet also able to facilitate subject-centred discussion of mental distress. This attempt will be analysed against the particular difficulties such a discourse faced in the Soviet context, in which public discussion of mental suffering from a subjective perspective was severely limited. The paper will show how the particularities of the Soviet context, with its paucity of subject-centred discourses on mental health, can offer important insights into the therapeutic potential of literature and the general importance of subject-centred and existential aspects to therapeutic practice. It can thus contribute to the important, ongoing debates about the relative balance between the biological and the discursive aspects of treating mental affliction.

Author

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Title

Narrating One's Own Madness: Mental Illness in Autobiographical text of modernizing Scandinavia

Abstract

This presentation addresses the question of how a very personal experience of mental illness finds its way to written forms of autobiography and asylum narrative. It is based on research in progress where I seek to define the history of asylum narrative, or autobiographical madness narrative, in Finland in its early stages. In this research in progress I examine autobiographical accounts of mental suffering in the first half of the 20th century in order to clarify how this particular illness narrative took root in Finnish culture.

In this presentation I introduce cases that come from Scandinavian context. I discuss the first Scandinavian asylum narrative written by the Norwegian woman writer Amalie Skram (1846–1905): *Professor Hieronimus* (1895; translated in English; *Under Observation*, 1992) and some of the first Finnish ones that were published during the 1910' and 1920'. In all of these texts the personal experience of mental illness is narrated and made public. I ask, why. I aim to clarify what kind of cultural context invited these narratives and what did they actually discuss about. I suggest that one of the keys to understand the emergence of these narratives is the historization of private life that occurred during the Nineteenth Century. Personal narratives became culturally important. This corresponds to the extension of subjectivity in the modern period and the prolific interest in the inner life of individuals.

Author

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Title

From Hysteria to Schizophrenia: Psychopathologic Conceptions in German Literature around 1900

Abstract

German Literature around 1900 provides a good example for the way in which psychiatric theories are reflected in fiction. Furthermore, it is possible to show how the change in style between 1890 and 1920 alters the perspective on psychic or mental illness. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and contemporary theories of hysteria and neurasthenia form the intellectual context for many works of the *fin de siècle*. At the same time they provide the narrative structures required by realistic representation. The author-doctor Arthur Schnitzler, for instance, makes use of techniques of dream analysis and free association to make literary figures psychologically plausible. Furthermore, the female protagonist as hysterical, e.g. in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's play *Electra* (1904), exploits that famous disease which formed one of the main objects of contemporary psychopathology, and indeed was constituted by this discipline.

If narrative coherence is still an aim of literature at the turn of the century, the expressionist *avant garde* after 1910 is much more interested in acausal narrative structures and in a break with linguistic convention. In this context the focus of interest moves from the neurotic to the psychotic. He is the decontextualised subject, which mediates cultural criticism in expressionist texts. A good example is the short story *The murder of a buttercup* (1910) by Alfred Döblin, another writer-doctor. This piece is not only about a schizophrenic, it is formally structured like the disconnected speech of the mentally ill. Thus, it shows how the medical context of literature moves from psychoanalysis to paranoid personality disorder in this period.

Author

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Title

Writing and Survival in Contemporary French Suicide Narratives

Abstract

This paper examines the trend towards increased publication of literary suicide narratives in France in the last twenty years, in order to explore intersections between literary and clinical approaches to suicidality. Drawn from initial research for a monograph on French suicide literature, the paper considers how the study of literature might further our understanding of suicide, and how psychological and sociological theories of suicide may be adapted for literary analysis.

After a brief overview of the trend, two representative texts will be considered. Édouard Levé's *Suicide* (2008) was presented as an exploration of the motivations behind a schoolfriend's suicide, but Levé's own suicide days after submission of his manuscript forces readings of the text as an extended suicide note, or a means for the writer to assess his own attitude to suicide. By contrast, Laurent Fialaix's *Nos bonheurs fragiles* (*Our fragile pleasures*, 2009) – the first-person account of a man's mourning and recovery process after his partner's suicide – invites reading as a diary, but is explicitly presented as a novel. Due to their ambiguous status between autobiography and fiction, their focus on responses to recent suicides, and their philosophical exploration of suicide in general, these texts exemplify key tendencies within recent suicide literature. It will be argued that these works' (semi-)fictional form can offer a space for authors and readers to engage with taboo aspects of suicide, such as its potential fascination or appeal, and they may thus have a useful therapeutic function as well as furthering our understanding of suicide.

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 4 –

Dr Brian Abrams	A Humanistic Perspective on the Discourse of Evidence-Based Practice in the Mental Health Literature: The Case of Psychiatric Music Therapy
Dr Alastair Morgan	Four Trajectories in the Encounter between Philosophy and Madness
Dr Paul Wallang	Wittgenstein's Legacy: Building a philosophical framework of meaning based on narrative through the union of culture, reason and the imagination
Dr Heike Bartel	Infanticide, Madness and the Medea myth

Author

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Title

A Humanistic Perspective on the Discourse of Evidence-Based Practice in the Mental Health Literature: The Case of Psychiatric Music Therapy

Abstract

In recent years, the professional mental health care literature has seen the proliferation of a growing discourse on *evidence-based practice*. For the most part, this discourse has been located philosophically within positivist perspectives and health science paradigms. However, quality mental health care practice is informed by dimensions of knowledge, skill, and expertise not compatible with a conventional science model of "evidence." This is poignantly clear in the creative arts therapies, as the arts are a strictly human phenomenon, intrinsically involving aesthetics, creativity, and imagination, none of which can be meaningfully reduced to predictive, casual relationships between operational variables. Moreover, as a human phenomenon, arts experiences necessarily involve both agency (self-determination) and relationship (ways of being together, in and through the arts). While these humanistic dimensions of the creative arts therapies are very real and valid, they are not amenable to conventional forms of evidence as understood from a positivist, medical science paradigm. Yet, these components have been marginalized from the discourse on evidence-based practice in psychiatric applications of creative arts therapies. This purpose of this paper is to explicate the role of an emerging literature on humanistic perspectives of evidence-based mental health practice, specifically understood in terms of the creative arts therapy discipline, *music therapy*. Implications for, justification of, and impact upon, psychiatric music therapy services, as well as mental health care services in general, will be discussed. Included in the discussion will be a proposed contextualization of music therapy as a *health humanity* versus *health science*.

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Title

Four Trajectories in the Encounter between Philosophy and Madness

Abstract

In this paper, I outline four different, yet overlapping, trajectories for the encounter between philosophy and madness in the 20th century. These are :

1). A phenomenological approach that views madness as an experience that can reveal the fundamental basis of lived experience. Madness can do this only *ex negativo*, - through the loss of a fundamental, background, attunement to the world, we can become aware of the taken for granted bases of experience that usually remain inaccessible and hidden.

2). A critical-historical approach that views madness as a lived reflection of the central contradictions of modern society.

3). Madness as other – as a liberating experience of excess.

4). Madness as a moment within reason. As Derrida termed it, 'a certain madness hovers over thinking'.

I conclude by considering the relevance of these four trajectories for understanding madness within the early 21st century.

Author

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Title

Wittgenstein's legacy: Building a philosophical framework of meaning based on narrative through the union of culture, reason and the imagination

Abstract

Narrative is an emerging adjunct in psychiatric communication allowing a meaning-based interpretation of patient experiences. Despite this fact the philosophical framework for such an approach remains largely unknown. The emphasis in psychiatry since its inception has been on post-Enlightenment thinking. However, the philosophical underpinnings of the alleged triumph of reason have more recently come under substantial critique, especially for shortcomings in understanding clinical presentations. This article builds on an earlier essay and aims to set out the underlying philosophical principles allowing the establishment of a practical and expedient use of the narrative technique to aid patient-physician interaction and therefore improve the quality of that encounter. It will give a philosophical overview of this technique demonstrating how the narrative approach can be underpinned by the works of such philosophers as Wittgenstein, Barthes and Heidegger. Furthermore it will describe its practical use in a worked example and finally expand the discussion with an argument for its integration in routine clinical consultation and the formation of a national narrative archive for mental health.

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Title

Infanticide, Madness and the Medea myth

Abstract

The classical myth of Medea who ends up killing the two young sons she has with Jason, the Argonaut, has inspired many adaptations in literature and art throughout the centuries.

'Madness' is one way of explaining her shocking deed, and writers like Paul Heyse (*Medea*, 1898), Jean Anouilh (*Médée*, 1946), or Cherríe Moraga (*The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*, 2003) portray 'their' Medeas as displaying various aspects of the broad spectrum of 'abnormal mental behaviour'. To put her in a straitjacket and gag her – as in Heyse's case – can be seen as reflecting and reflecting upon ways in which a society deals with a woman who contradicts established socio-cultural, psychological, legal, and even biological expectations of how a mother should behave, and who functions as a warning against the potential horror of the unleashed female 'Other'.

We will contrast these Medea adaptations with Euripides' version of 431 BC. Euripides' Medea possesses great complexity and defies reduction to the single determining feature of 'madness'. She is the (female) victim who is also the (male) aggressor and, crucially, psychologically frail *and* of great mental strength, composed *and* raging. The conflicting elements of Euripides' Medea challenge our thinking and culminate in the tense, emotionally and intellectually challenging oxymoronic structure of the infanticidal mother which resists reduction to a single – and therefore safely defusable – facet: 'she must have been mad'.

Saturday 7th August 15.00-17.00

PANEL 5 –

Professor Larry Zaroff	Breathing the Same Air. Cognitive Failure in King Lear and Willie Loman: Clones for teaching the dimensions of dementia to future doctors.
Dr Andrea Capstick	'Confabulation' in late onset dementia: triangulating censored histories through first-person narrative and literary fiction
Dr Angela Woods	Autopathography and the 'Crumbling Twin Pillars' of Kraepelinian Psychiatry
Dr Helen Bralesford	<i>Rainman, Shine and Double Vision</i> : Advancing Representations of Autistic Spectrum through literature, film and cultural text?

Author

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Title

Breathing the Same Air. Cognitive Failure in King Lear and Willie Loman: Clones for teaching the dimensions of dementia to future doctors

Abstract

William Shakespeare, in King Lear and Arthur Miller in Death of a Salesman grew from different cultures as much as their protagonists. Yet these two great tragedies are similar. Their creations, two old men, King Lear and Willy Loman, though one a king and the other a salesman, could be clones, alike in their desires and their failed solutions. Each seeks love and loyalty, but each gives away what he seeks through poor judgment, cognitive failure. They are trapped, held underwater by their mistakes. They have the same fatal flaws: they could not accept reality nor could they tolerate being ordinary. What was the underlying cause of their awful misjudgments? Was it organic, cortical, dementia or something similar? Synaptic failure, intellectual, emotional misfiring, depression?

They have aged and weakened, undrapping what was once covered by ermine robes and sales success. What do we want our future doctors to understand about ageing and the human condition? That we all die, kings and salesmen. That we are not unique, not extraordinary. That regardless of rank, power, knowledge, money we are not so different than Lear and Loman. That we make mistakes. That we prove our humanity when we err.

Author

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Title

'Confabulation' in late onset dementia: triangulating censored histories through first-person narrative and literary fiction

Abstract

In mainstream psychiatric discourse, confabulation – the tendency to provide fanciful or fantasised accounts of life history – is considered to be part of the clinical presentation of late onset dementia. Older people diagnosed with dementia are thus regarded as 'unreliable narrators', prone to invention in order to conceal gaps in memory, or add drama to unremarkable lives. Often, however, remarkable co-incidences can be found between first-person narrative biographies of people with dementia (such as those recorded by Clegg 2008) and historically accurate literary fiction. This is particularly true of events which have been expurgated from more orthodox 'official histories', and thus from collective social memory of the first half of the 20th century, during which people who now have dementia grew up and came of age. This paper draws on a number of contemporary novels to argue that much of the assumed confabulation of older people is due to what Jacoby (1996) termed 'social amnesia'. In this view people with dementia become the bearers of inconvenient truths, unpalatable or incomprehensible to subsequent generations, including those now charged with providing their care.

Author

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Title

Autopathography and the 'Crumbling Twin Pillars' of Kraepelinian Psychiatry

Abstract

In 1896 Emil Kraepelin revolutionised the classification of psychosis by identifying what he argued were two natural disease entities: manic-depressive psychosis (bipolar disorder) and dementia praecox (schizophrenia). For over a century this model has governed psychiatric thinking, practice and research, but not without opposition. Adding to the long-standing critiques of 'antipsychiatric' theorists and service users, a growing number of clinical psychologists, geneticists, and others working at the heart of mainstream psychiatry have argued that the Kraepelinian dichotomy is unsupported by the available scientific evidence (see Craddock and Owen 2010, Greene 2007, Bentall 2004). These researchers favour a symptom-led approach focussing on specific experiences such as voice-hearing.

As the use of the term madness attests, scholars working in the field of 'madness and literature' tend to be less interested in the finer points of psychiatric taxonomy than in the richly textured world of subjective experience. The advantages of this approach have been well-documented recently by Crawford and Baker (2009), but what, if anything, might it overlook?

My paper explores this question through a close reading of two very different texts: Elyn Saks' *The Center Cannot Hold* (2007) and Kurt Snyder's *Me, Myself, and Them* (2007). How do these autopathographies treat the specificity of psychiatric diagnosis? Is the label or concept of schizophrenia important, and if so, why? As well as offering insight into each individual's experience, these autopathographies, I suggest, can also help us clarify what is at stake in the debate over the status, meaning, and future of psychiatric nosology.

Author

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Title

Rainman, Shine and Double Vision: Advancing Representations of the Autistic Spectrum through literature, film and cultural text?

Abstract

There is a growing interest in recovering representations of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from pre-1940s literature, that is, pre- Kanner and Asperger's scientific recognition of the disorder. Similarly the body of contemporary cultural texts engaging with ASD is expanding exponentially as the rate of diagnosis rises and as controversial cases (Gary MacKinnon's extradition, for example) hit newspaper headlines.

Yet many of these representations promote a stereotypical image of those on the spectrum; often that of the "savant" whose high-functioning autism becomes inextricably linked in public consciousness with exceptional talent. Such representations, while raising awareness of the condition, also create problems. They produce expectations in educators and limit understanding amongst the general public of a complex condition which takes diverse forms. Such perceptions have the potential to impact on anyone diagnosed with the disorder in their daily lives, in their learning, in their employment prospects, in their medical treatment.

Employing examples from writers such as Jane Austen, Hermann Melville, David Henry Thoreau, Henry James, Mark Haddon, Douglas Coupland, Margaret Atwood, Pat Barker and films such as Rain Man (1988), Shine (1996), A Beautiful Mind (2001) and TV, Magnificent Seven, this paper begins to address some of the issues surrounding both the recovery of early representations of ASD in literature and of contemporary representations in literature, film, television and newspaper reportage.

Sunday 8th August 09.00 – 11.00

PANEL 1 –

Dr Lars Bernaerts	The figure of the psychiatrist in modern fiction
Erin Sullivan	Looking across the divide: Reading Jean Rhys's <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> in the era of cultural competence
Samantha Walton	Guilty But Insane: Psychiatric Detectives in the 'Golden Age'
Dr Pete Goward	The Gypsy And The Virgin

Author

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Title

The figure of the psychiatrist in modern fiction

Abstract

For those who investigate madness in literature, the fictional psychiatrist is arguably at least as interesting as the madman. Madness is always defined in relation to the normal, and the psychiatrist is the gatekeeper of the latter field. He defines madness, as it were, and he can also bridge normality and madness. The fictional psychiatrists who appear in modern fiction represent the various traditions and paradigms in psychiatry. Next to his referential value the literary figure of the psychiatrist often entails a lot of penetrating questions regarding the status of the subject and its relation to society. When the interaction with the psychiatrist is presented in a narrative, the psychiatrist often seems to be able to give a decisive twist to the story, reveal hidden information or solve a crucial problem. In this paper, I explore some of the striking features of the way psychiatrists are depicted in modern fiction and discuss their role in the literary significance. Firstly, I will introduce three types of fictional psychiatrists: the institutional psychiatrist, the clinical psychiatrist and the analytical psychiatrist. These three types entail different approaches to the subject, different ethical problems and psychological processes. Secondly, I will zero in on the functions related to these types in the significance of the literary work as a whole. Dominant functions are the narrative function (the psychiatrist affects the progression of the narrative), the ethical function (the psychiatrist's behavior activates ethical questions that are crucial to the understanding of the narrative) and the ideological function (the psychiatrist is portrayed as the representative of a particular ideological stance). In my paper, well-known literary examples (Kesey, Heller, Barthelme, Lodge) will be used to illustrate and substantiate the types and functions of the fictional psychiatrist.

Author

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Title

Looking across the divide: Reading Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the era of cultural competence

Abstract

Jean Rhys's last and most celebrated novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), has for many years been a staple of undergraduate English modules on modernism, postcolonial literature, and gender studies. Inspired by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Wide Sargasso Sea* gives voice to Mr Rochester's 'mad' Creole wife, Bertha Mason, who haunted Jane Eyre from her improvised asylum in the attic of Thornfield Hall. Much has been written from a literary perspective on the way in which Rhys's novel explores the experience of mental alienation, especially as it develops across cultural divides, and in this paper I would like to expand such analysis, suggesting that the novel also offers unique opportunities for those working and teaching within the context of medical humanities. Over the past decade mental healthcare policy and practice has increasingly emphasized the role cultural differences might play in the process of diagnosis, treatment, and healing, highlighting how mental wellbeing is influenced not only by biology and environment, but also by cultural expectations, beliefs, and negotiations. In this paper I would like to bring attention to the ways in which Rhys's novel might allow students and researchers to consider issues of 'cultural competence', as they have come to be known, from both a historical and literary point of view. Looking largely at Rhys's innovative and skilful use of linguistic form and narrative point of view, this paper will offer some ideas about how *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in the midst of the anti-psychiatry movement, critiques the idea of 'madness' in the Victorian era. Furthermore, it will suggest some possible strategies for incorporating the novel into medical humanities-oriented programmes on the topic of cultural competence in mental health today.

Author

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Title

Guilty But Insane: Psychiatric Detectives in the 'Golden Age'

Abstract

It is often noted that crime fiction of the so-called 'golden age' probed notions of stable identity, gender roles and class positions, in pursuit of a malefactor who is emphatically not *other*, but who is part of a social milieu rendered unfamiliar. Less well documented are the modifications to the self-consciously formulaic detective narrative made in response to the incursion of psychiatric discourse in criminal law, and to popular perceptions of insanity. This paper explores the representation of psychiatry in a range of golden age texts, establishing the influence of debates concerning responsibility and madness on a genre designed to excite and absorb a mass readership. As psychiatrists and jurists during the 1920s and 1930s contended whether it was possible to be both guilty and insane, detection club writers including Agatha Christie, Christianna Brand and Gladys Mitchell depicted criminals motivated by recently taxonomised mental pathologies and psychic delusions. Mitchell's psychoanalytic, female detective subverted the scientific rationality of the heroic, masculine detective figure by employing unconventional psychiatric techniques, while Christie's and Brand's attitudes to class and gender inequalities surfaced in characters driven mad by social circumstance. By involving their characters in efforts to conceal the offender, or offering them the chance of redemption through psychiatric recovery under the detective-analyst's expert guidance, these writers interrogated the certainties of the genre itself as a ritual unveiling of deviancy and, as this paper proposes, reflected an important intersection of psychiatric discourse with the popular literary imagination.

Author

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Title:

The Gypsy And The Virgin

Abstract

Drawing from D.H. Lawrence's novella 'The Virgin and the Gypsy', this paper seeks to explore the relationship of 'otherness' to the attribution of 'madness'.

Lawrence's novel is written from the perspective of a well-to-do family and the story that unfolds is suffused with the cultural mores of middle class northern life in the early part of this century. The novel therefore depicts the un-named Gypsies as dangerously romantic and wilfully dirty, in effect as 'others'. Others who, by their very existence, are not only corrupt in themselves but also threaten to corrupt the established order. Such behaviours prompted contemporary psychiatrists and indeed the general public to label Gypsies as mad for spurning a sedentary way of living for an apparently nomadic one.

The presentation seeks to use excerpts from 'The Virgin and the Gypsy' and personal experience to demonstrate how contemporary Travelling people would see things differently from Lawrence's sedentary perspective. In doing so the presentation will examine how issues of purity, contamination and transience would, for them and their culture, suggest that it is the Gypsies that are the 'right thinking' ones and the sedentary house dwellers that could be labelled the 'mad' ones.

Sunday 8th August 09.00 – 11.00

PANEL 2 –

Gemma Ward	Fictional Accounts of Abnormal Illness Behaviour: Do Lay Writers Get It Right and Do These Accounts Have a Beneficial Value for Clinical Practice?
Dr Carol-Ann Farkas	Why What's in the Wallpaper Matters: Enhancing Health Sciences Students' Understanding of Mental Illness Through the Study of Literature
Professor David H. Flood	Peering Outside the Silo: Portrayals of Mental Disorders and the Education of Healthcare Professionals
Allison Alexander	From Mary Wollstonecraft to Stacey Slater: how stories of mental distress and recovery and be used in learning and teaching to mental health students

Author

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Title

Fictional Accounts of Abnormal Illness Behaviour: Do Lay Writers get it Right and Do These Accounts Have a Beneficial Value for Clinical Practice?

Abstract

Abnormal illness behaviour is any maladaptive means of interpreting and reacting in response to one's state of health, but is poorly understood by modern doctors. It is linked to somatoform disorders, in which presentation of unexplained somatic symptoms is key, and has substantial negative effects upon the patient, doctor and economy.

This essay explores representations of abnormal illness behaviour within six fictional novels, first to compare accounts with current medical descriptions, and second, to consider whether reading fiction can improve the clinician's understanding of the lived experience of patients. The influences of cultural and societal factors upon illness beliefs at the time the works were written are also analysed.

On the whole, lay interpretations of illness behaviour in fiction are found to be reasonably accurate. The causative and maintaining factors in abnormal illness behaviour like subconscious secondary gain, parental influences and psychological distress are well described. The negative impact of a poor doctor-patient relationship upon somatising behaviour is portrayed differently, but accurately, in two novels. The frustration experienced by doctors treating these patients is also seen.

Conclusions drawn regarding the benefits for clinicians reading these works include greater understanding of the psychosocial factors influencing patients' illness behaviour, and knowledge that more time should be spent listening to patients and addressing their concerns. Overall, in an age when doctors tend to disengage from the psychological and social aspects of their patients, novels are a means of reminding them of the human aspects of medicine.

Author

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Title

Why What's in the Wallpaper Matters: Enhancing Health Sciences Students' Understanding of Mental Illness Through the Study of Literature

Abstract

When my health sciences students read narratives of mental illness, they initially treat them as case studies, trying to figure out what is "wrong" with the patient. A course on Literature and Medicine adds an essential dimension to students' training, taking them beyond clinical heuristics, to engage with the texts imaginatively and emotionally. Reading Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," or Jamison's *An Unquiet Mind*, students re-discover that the fundamentally human act of story-telling allows patients and providers-as authors or readers-to see one another as subjects rather than objects of study. Drawing on Hawkins' work on pathography, we consider how narrative functions as a tool of integration for patients: by taking authorial control over the illness-as-story, they can make rational sense of an irrational experience. Referring to Sontag, we consider how authors employ figurative language to describe the experience of mental illness, and then use the illness experience as a metaphor to critique social conventions and oppression. In their course-work, students draw connections between clinical instruction and broader issues of individual and social wellness that they tend not to explore elsewhere in the curriculum. These future health care providers discover that the broader range of meanings available in literary, figurative narrative provides invaluable insight into the nature of mental illness-that it changes not only one's perceptions, but one's relationship to self and others; that the illness is not a discrete physiological episode, but a complex process influenced by historical and cultural context.

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Title

Peering Outside the Silo: Portrayals of Mental Disorders and the Education of Healthcare Professionals

Abstract

A problem with professional education is that the profession can all too quickly become a silo, blocking vision of anything beyond. Using healthcare education in a United States university as an example, this presentation will examine efforts to counteract this tendency by teaching about mental disorders through the use of literary portrayals.

In looking at a clinical problem from a humanistic perspective, the approach does not simply use literary accounts as substitutes for cases and reduce them to illustrations—a danger in general when literature is enlisted to teach about medicine. Instead, it illustrates the value of a richly textured story in providing insight into the experience of a mental disorder as lived—something that the more reductive case, diagnostic category, or other categorization cannot do. Additionally, it brings to bear on the task of understanding mental problems the tools of literary analysis and points out, for example, the importance of point of view, plot construction, varied reader interpretation, and choice of language in assessing the information we are given about a particular character's/person's psychological state, be that patient, therapist, or a family or community member.

In addition to providing an overview of the course and its methods, the presentation will discuss its broader context of interdisciplinary approaches to healthcare issues in general—Healthcare and the Media, Medicine and the Arts, for example—in our university's College of Nursing and Health Professions where students range from preprofessional studies, nursing, and behavioral health counseling to creative arts therapies.

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Title

From Mary Wollstonecraft to Stacey Slater: how stories of mental distress and recovery can be used in learning and teaching mental health students

Abstract

This oral presentation will describe how true stories and fictional work can be used in a range of ways to enhance learning and teaching in an undergraduate mental health nursing degree programme. The presenter will give a number of examples of how this has been done from the application to the programme stage (interview group activity) then in formal teaching and learning activities throughout the programme. The presentation will propose that drawing on a wide range of creative genre including fictional soap characters (Stacey Slater), 'real life' magazine features and accounts of historical fiction based on real people (Mary Wollstonecraft) can increase engagement with a range of mental health topics particularly from students who might not otherwise participate.

The presenter will then go on to demonstrate how she has used her own creative writing and lived experience as an aid to teaching and learning. In particular, participants will be invited to view and (if time allows) participate in an exercise that involves a fictional post-apocalyptic world. As citizens of a newly formed democratic country, students have to design and agree on various aspects of health law. This exercise is fun to do and considered enjoyable yet it enables students to grasp difficult concepts in relation to jurisprudence. Finally conclusions will be drawn as to the benefits and limitations of using stories (real and imagined) in the classroom setting.

Sunday 8th August 09.00 – 11.00

PANEL 3 –

Mary Elene Wood	'Will they hear and be convinced by my story?' Personal accounts from <i>The Schizophrenia Bulletin</i>
Dr Ian Williams	Autography as Auto-therapy: Psychic Pain and the Graphic Memoir
Katarzyna Szmigiero	Two accounts of one life: Marya Hornbacher's <i>Wasted and Madness</i> in close up

Author

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Title

'Will they hear and be convinced by my story?' Personal accounts from *The Schizophrenia Bulletin*.

Abstract

Theory on narrative and illness maintains that through narrative the ill or injured individual can reconstitute identity and regain control of his or her life story. My paper addresses what such "narrative repair" might look like when the narrator's illness is schizophrenia. While interdisciplinary research has addressed the detrimental effects of schizophrenia on the ability to narrate a coherent life story, little attention has been paid to schizophrenic narrators as creative agents actively engaged in life-story-telling not only as a means of rebuilding identity but as an art form that embodies the crisis in meaning experienced in psychosis. In this paper, I examine narratives by writers with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder taken from ten years of The Schizophrenia Bulletin (1997-2007), a multidisciplinary journal for clinicians and researchers that includes in each issue a "Personal Account" written by a patient. The form of these accounts is shaped by the scientific goals of the journal, which seeks to educate its audience not about literary expression but about patient experiences. However, the writers often push the boundaries of the genre. They exercise "narrative repair" of identity by emphasizing both their present story-telling and their past attempts at meaning-making while in the throes of delusion, attempts that were most likely invisible to clinicians. Essential to this meaning-making (expressed in both narrative form and content) is less the assertion of a healed self than the ongoing interplay between the rupture and reconstruction of identity.

Author

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Title

Autography as Auto-therapy: Psychic Pain and the Graphic Memoir

Abstract

When Justin Green published *Binky Brown Meets The Holy Virgin Mary* in 1972 he unwittingly helped to found a new genre in comics: the autobiographical memoir of suffering or disease or *graphic pathography*. Green was trying to make sense of what he was undergoing, some time before he knew he was suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder and before the availability of effective treatments. The creation of this comic seems to have served as a release valve for the psychic pressure inside Green's head; an exorcism articulating his distress via his chosen mode of communication. Nearly four decades later, the genre has flourished and many graphic novels and comics seem to constitute catalogues of psychological suffering. The reasons for making a graphic work must be myriad but there is evidence that some works are made as a cathartic endeavour stemming from a personal psychological necessity. Authors have suggested that telling one's story actually helps to structure or restructure the memory, and comics is a powerful medium with which to convey the subjective self, well suited to articulating complex emotions and ambiguous ideas, which can create empathic bonds between the artist and reader.

Can closure be achieved, however? In Green's case this seems doubtful. Through examination of the work of Willy Linthout, Alison Bechdel, Art Spiegelman and others, this paper asks whether autography can indeed help to release the autobiographer from psychological distress or the 'unhealed wound[s]' (Gardener 2008, p17) of past trauma.

Ref: Gardener, J. (2008) Autography' s biography 1972-2007. *Biography*, 31(1)

Author

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Title

Two accounts of one life: Marya Hornbacher's *Wasted* and *Madness* in close-up

Abstract

Women's madness narratives, or autobiographic accounts of struggle with mental illness, as well as that dealing with treatment and recovery, have become increasingly popular. Some of them are indebted to the therapeutic framework within which the author received her treatment – books by Mary Barnes, Hanna Green or Rachel Reiland can serve as examples. In other cases, it is the illness that influences the way in which the story is constructed. It is especially visible in biographies of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia who attempt to render their experience resorting to highly poetic language, unusual associations and dream-like logic. In both cases, one's life story is interpreted through a theoretical - medical, cultural, psychological or therapeutic - framework. Thus, it is interesting to compare two accounts of her life written by Marya Hornbacher: *Wasted. A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia* (1998) and *Madness. A Bipolar Life* (2008). Although the second text can be seen as a sequel, both present her childhood and adolescence, yet focus on different events and/or attribute different motivation to the character. Hornbacher analyses her life according to her current diagnosis in such a way as to make it coherent with her experience. It is the psychiatric label that makes her 'discover' her true motivation, find meaning in previously irrelevant behaviour. Comparing the ways in which the two texts re/construct the narrator's self, it becomes clear how strongly the present modifies the perception of the past in order to provide us with a sense of continuity and integrity.

Sunday 8th August 09.00 – 11.00

PANEL 4 –

Noah Moskat	Matter, Method, Malady: The Theme of Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy
Sonja Deschrijver	The Devil in Writing: Malady, Mind and Medicine in Early Modern Spiritual Text and Criminal Trial Proceedings
Dr Rafael Vélez-Núñez	Describing madness in William Davenant's <i>The Rivals</i> (1668)
Mark Ryan	'A vast Spine writh'd in torment': Psycho-physiological influences in William Blake

Author

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Title

Matter, Method, Malady: The Theme of Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy

Abstract

From Polonius' perception that "this be madness, yet there is method in't" to Macbeth witnessing "a false creation [of] the heat-oppressèd brain" to Edgar's observation of "reason in madness," the theme of madness and mental instability is prominent in much of Shakespeare's work, yet seems to seize its deepest and most poignant role within his high tragedies. Intricacies and complications relating to madness abound in these particular plays—including the nature of its evolution within the individual mind; its multifold public and personal manifestations; the balancing act between feigned and "true" madness; its potential for redefinition of embattled identities; and the ways that it functions in the development of tragic form. This presentation—based upon my thesis project which examines *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* specifically—will discuss characters, speeches and instances from these plays that can be (and have been) interpreted as mad. These observations will work to identify the most pertinent and compelling aspects of the mad conditions of Shakespeare's tragedies, and in turn reflect on how conceptions of madness are defined, expanded and complicated both within and between these seminal texts.

Author

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Title

The Devil in Writing: Malady, Mind and Medicine in Early Modern Spiritual Text and Criminal Trial Proceedings

Abstract

This paper proposes to compare the fate of two seventeenth-century women, living in present-day Belgium, who both were struck by psychosomatic experience attributed to the devil's influence. The accounts of the two women show some interesting similarities. On the one hand they both experienced physical and mental suffering which was demonized, but on the other their illness drew in notions of a mind more open to spiritual insight and creativity. The way in which their stories were preserved for history is however quite different. On the one hand, we encounter a Carmelite nun who, inheriting the rhetoric of Theresa of Avila, wrote down her struggles in a spiritual diary. Her turmoil was furthermore the subject of a biography written by her confessor and exorcist. This remarkable set of writings was recently recovered and edited by Nicky Hallet. On the other hand we come across a simple lay woman whose physical outbursts in church were seen as blasphemous. Her arrest and resulting trial saved her from the obscurity of history. In other words, this paper proposes to compare a "madness" encapsulated in literature with one that is not. In doing so, I hope to discover in which way the creative process of writing makes a difference in the presentation and experience of madness. Furthermore, a close reading of seventeenth-century materials may reveal much about the construction of psychosomatic disorder, the dynamics between patient- and doctor figures and the use of narrative and rhetorical models.

Author

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Title

Describing madness in William Davenant's *The Rivals* (1668)

Abstract

William Davenant was one of the most prolific playwrights of the Restoration stage. He wrote extensively before and during the 1660's, and also adapted several pre-Restoration plays by others, mainly Shakespeare. *The Rivals* is an adaptation of the Jacobean comedy *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634) by Fletcher and Shakespeare. In the original play one of the secondary female characters, the jailer's daughter, goes mad when she thinks that Palamon is dead. In *The Rivals* this plot is further developed by Davenant, and the anonymous "jailer's daughter" becomes Celia, one of the two main characters in the play. She also goes mad after believing the man she loves, Philander, and whom she has helped escape from prison, is dead in the woods. However, she also suspects that Philander does not love her, but Heraclia—this suspicion being also an ingredient of her love-madness. Throughout the play Davenant monitors and describes the onset and symptomatology of Celia's madness, providing a complete description of the behavior and language associated with the woman's psychopathology. The representation of mad characters, especially female ones, on stage is not exclusive to the Restoration, but it is in this period that female mad characters acquire an increasingly prominent role, and elaborate mad scenes, being the climax of the character's madness, are written by playwrights with enormous success. This play, written in 1668 advances some of the formal characteristics of the prototypical mad scene, with its use of singing and fantastic language. The aim of this paper is to analyse the character of Celia as a forerunner of the Restoration's "distracted" heroine in the light of contemporary medical treatises, especially those by Jacques Ferrand, John Headrich or H.M. Herwig, as well as the tradition of theatrical madness in Europe.

Author

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Title

'A vast Spine writh'd in torment': Psycho-physiological Influences in William Blake

Abstract

William Blake's depictions of the mind range from those of 'raving madness' to kings that have lost their reason. In his verbal and visual art, Blake uses organic imagery in his representations of mental illness, describing facial contortions, the manipulation of nerve-fibres and depictions of visceral and painful physical separations between his characters to indicate that physical evolutions herald psychological ones:

'all the while from his Back

A Blue fluid exuded in Sinews hardening in the Abyss

Till it separated into a Male Form howling in Jealousy' (William Blake, *Milton*, 3.32 - 36; E97)

Psychic change does not occur in Blake without the body undergoing some form of acute suffering or physical trauma. Blake's 'Outline of Identity' acquires, beyond its purely aesthetic meanings, further psycho-physiological resonance within Blake's corpus, in considering changes in the physical contours of the body as a yardstick for psychic alteration.

This paper will examine the ways in which Blake's understanding of the body helped to shape his views of mental distress. The discussion will be informed by reference to the impact of the study of physiognomy as advanced by Johann Lavater, the influence of phrenology as advanced by Franz Joseph Gall and Johann G. Spurzheim, John Brown's 'excitability' theory and the scientific scrutiny of nerve-fibres, all of which inspired widespread and serious consideration in medical circles of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

2nd International Health Humanities Conference – Summer 2012

Center for Bioethics and Humanities, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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The Madness and Literature Network – www.madnessandliterature.org

The Madness and Literature Network aims to stimulate cooperation and co-working between researchers, academics, clinicians, service users, carers and creative writers in order to develop an interdisciplinary, global dialogue about the issues raised around representations of madness in literature. Literary research has become a key resource for the advancement of medical and health professionals' education, affording broader perspectives, critical thinking skills and promoting an emotionally receptive or empathic climate for clinical practice. With this project, we are seeking to form new methodologies, strengthen and maintain partnerships and enable comprehensive critical dialogues across the fields of literature, linguistics and mental health care.

The term 'madness' is employed deliberately to signal our alignment with literary and historical scholarship and our commitment to a broad, inclusive approach, rather than a necessarily narrower clinical focus as would be implied by terms such as 'mental disorder', 'mental illness', or by naming a specific illness in our titling. We encourage individual reviewers to use whichever language they are comfortable with or find useful when writing for our site.

With financial support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, we are developing an International Madness and Literature Network, consisting of interested clinicians, academics from a variety of humanities-based disciplines and service users. In addition to this conference, the project also consist of:

Website – The website has been developed with that aim of internationalising the Network. It contains a growing database of fiction and autobiography relating to madness and mental health – this currently has around 100 books included in it, which have been read and reviewed in part for the Leverhulme Trust funded project, hence it has a post-war focus at this stage. We welcome reviews from members of our network of any texts relating to issues of madness and mental health. These reviews will be fully peer-reviewed and published on the site, with full accreditation to the reviewer.

Four Seminars - Femi Oyeboode spoke at our first seminar on Power and Psychiatry. Our second seminar was in May 2009 on Creativity and Mental Health, with authors Paul Sayer and Patrick Gale leading the day and Paul Crawford providing an opening paper. The final two seminars were focused on Mental States, with Charley Baker, Professor Patricia Duncker and Dr Maurice Lipsedge presenting papers, and Ethnicity, Diversity, Madness and Fiction, with Professor Mark Johnson leading the day and additional papers presented by Paul Crawford and Brian Brown. Podcasts are available for a selection of these talks on the website.

For further information on the Madness and Literature Network please contact Charley Baker: charlotte.l.baker@nottingham.ac.uk



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