

Report 2013-2014

BSA Sociology, Psychoanalysis and the Psychosocial Study Group

Convenors

Peter Redman (Open University) and Sasha Roseneil (Birkbeck, University of London)

Founded

2011

Membership

The Study Group has 123 members, of whom 63 are BSA members and 55 are non-members (and 5 whose status is unknown).

The Study Group maintains a JISC mail list (BSA-PSYCHOANALYSIS-PSYCHOSOCIAL@JISCMAIL.AC.UK) that has 216 subscribers.

Aims of the Study Group

The aim of the Study Group is to provide a forum for those interested in:

- the relationship between sociology and psychoanalysis
- and/ or the sociological investigation of the psychosocial

Activities in 2013-14

Our third year has seen the Study Group continue to grow its membership and continue to attract large numbers to our events. Our membership has increased from 111 members to 123, and our JISC mail list has from 195 to 216 subscribers during the year.

On 24 May 2013, we co-sponsored a workshop at the Open University Camden Campus in London, organised by Elizabeth Silva (Open Univeristy), Lynn Froggett (University of Central Lancashire), and Julian Manley (University of Central Lancashire), in collaboration with the Psychosocial Research Group of CCIG (Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance) at the OU. The workshop, "Cultural Haunting and the Shared Unconscious: an experiment with dream and art in cosmopolitan space" was innovative in focus and format: both an academic, intellectual engagement with recent methodological developments in psychosocial studies involving "social dreaming", and an artistic event, with the Brazilian/US artist, Sheila Goloborotko (Pratt Institute).

In the autumn term, we organised two "sold-out" as part of our project of furthering sociological engagement with matters psychosocial, and with practitioners and theorists from the fields of group analysis, group relations, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

On 25 October 2013, we held a study afternoon, “Interrogating the Social Unconscious II”, in collaboration with the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research, at Birkbeck, University of London. This was the follow-up to a highly successful seminar on the same theme which took place in January 2013. 40 people attended the study afternoon, which was addressed by Earl Hopper, who is a group analyst and psychoanalyst who has written widely on the concept, and by Christopher Scanlon, who is also a group analyst and consultant psychotherapist. Readings were distributed in advance, and participants engaged in intense discussion, in small groups and in the plenary sessions, about the usefulness and meaning of the notion of the social unconscious.

Also at Birkbeck, and in collaboration with the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations and the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research, the Study Group organised a seminar on 29 November 2013, entitled “Going through Overwhelming Experiences: Organisations in Times of Austerity”. Convened by study group member Dr Milena Stateva, of the Tavistock Institute, the seminar involved the presentation of four fascinating case studies by researchers and consultants working with organisations that are being buffeted from many sides as funding is cut and internal pressure builds. The case studies explored how working within such organisations can be an overwhelming experience, and the seminar offered a space for reflection on the range of methods and approaches that can incorporate psychoanalysis in the sociological study of organisations and working life. Case study presenters were Mannie Sher and Elizabeth Kershaw (The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations), Valerie Walkerdine (Cardiff University) and David Studdert (Cardiff University), David Morgan (Psychoanalyst and Consultant Psychotherapist, Whistleblowers UK), and Elizabeth Cotton (Middlesex University). The closing plenary was addressed by David Bell (Psychiatrist, Tavistock Clinic and Past President British Psychoanalytic Society) and William Halton (Independent Consultant). 42 people attended the seminar.

Sasha Roseneil and Peter Redman

February 2014.