

Philosophy and Psychiatry



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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Philosophy SIG newsletter. In this summer edition of the newsletter, we host some exciting announcements related to our forthcoming online conference on 2nd of October 2024 titled "Emerging Philosophical

themes in psychiatry and mental health: navigating the era of machine learning and generative AI”, [Philosophy SIG Annual Conference: Emerging philosophical themes in psychiatry and mental health \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](#) and about future events we are affiliated to. You will also find reviews by Dr Ioana Toma and Dr Costa Sava on the two events we co-organised with the HOPSIG and EPSIG earlier this year. Both events were very successful, and we are grateful for your support in them. Dr Savva has already shared his reflections with the membership of EPSIG via its newsletter, and kindly agreed to repropose them for our members.

Ahead of the Philosophy SIG annual conference you will receive a special edition of the newsletter with material relevant to it. In the meantime, you can start sending comments and questions at philosophysig@gmail.com you may have regarding the current discourse on AI and its potential implications in mental healthcare. The questions will be gathered, and the emerging themes will inform the discussion in the day between the participants and the amazing speakers who have agreed to come and talk to us.

Finally, I would also like to raise awareness about the event organised by the Psychiatry Section of the Royal Society of Medicine on the 6th and 7th of March 2025 on Kraepelin’s legacy to modern psychiatry. The title of the event is “After Kraepelin: Ambitions, Images, Practices and the History of Psychiatry 1926-2026” and hosts an amazing panel of speakers. The RSM Psychiatry Section has created an exclusive 40% discount voucher for members of the Philosophy Special Interest Group. You will find more details in the pages that follow.

Dr Anastasios Dimopoulos

Chair of the Philosophy SIG of the Royal of Psychiatrists

Consultant Psychiatrist

CNWL NHS Foundation Trust

Reviews of Past Events

Philosophy SIG and History of Psychiatry SIG webinar,

Thursday, 1 February 2024

'Psychiatry, Society and the State: The end of political neutrality?'

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Rudolf Virchow, the 19th century German physician considered to be the founder of cellular pathology, asserted that 'Medicine is social science and politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale'. Nowadays this statement could easily be considered controversial for those who think of medicine as being divorced from societal power structures, when thinking about misuses of power intrinsic to the social role of the psychiatrist in some of the past's troubled historical narratives.

In the last decades, there has been a surge of various examples of mental health and social inequalities within society's deepest structures. Apart from a comprehensive assessment of the human factor, this calls for a wider dialogue between disciplines which closely sit alongside psychiatry. Medical humanities, including philosophy of science and history of mental health, act as investigative resources in the quest for knowledge, and bridging them for this purpose sparked the idea of this multidisciplinary webinar.

The first talk was opened by Dr George Ikkos, Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and past Chair of the History of Psychiatry Special Interest Group (HoPSIG). He approached inequality and information from a socio-economical perspective when contrasting high-income with low-income population, a phenomenon which became evident after 1980s in the UK. He posits that the country's history, including mental health systems, can be understood from an imperialist point of view, when thinking about the economic crisis and the advent of neoliberalism after 1970s, an idea stipulated by David Edgerton's book 'The rise and fall of the British Nation'.

Translating this idea into psychiatric knowledge it means to think about the consequences of the closing of asylums and the transition to community care which happened in an era of profound political and economic changes. From a libertarian

point of view, institutionalization was associated with an infringement of human rights and reflected in the work of Erving Goffmann¹ and Wing and Brown². In careful studies to come it was shown that this change was associated with poorer symptom control and physical health outcomes, poor continuity of care, increased homelessness³. It is worth mentioning some notable positive examples such as the implementation of the Care Programme Approach⁴ which put the focus on continuity of care and the importance of relationships.

During an interview in the 1908s, Margaret Thatcher famously asserted 'There is no such thing as society' which, within the same line of thought, made me think of Donald Winnicott's saying 'There is no such thing as a baby'. Society is not an abstraction on its own and only makes sense as a nexus of people and groups underpinning its most profound structures. In parallel to this, psychiatry can be conceptualised as being primarily social. This is not to say the biological has no role in the 'big scheme of mental things', especially as behaviour, thought and feeling do have biochemical foundations. Dr Ikkos rather postulates that in recent decades, political economy, digitalization and social factors have had an immense influence on psychiatric knowledge and treatment.

The Global Risks Report in 2024 highlighted misinformation and disinformation as the factors with the highest technological risk in a 2 year-period. From a dialectical perspective, this translates into how people can distort information and create narratives to fit certain mental representations which then become embedded into praxis. This concept is being explored in another part of Dr Ikkos' talk which draws allegorical parallels to the 'Mean Images' belonging to the artist Hito Steyerl.

She calls mean images algorithmic generations of AI art, a 'lifeless' rendering of an alive object, and extrapolates further when making reference to censorship of violent images on social media imposed on exile workers. The attempt of such technological endeavours to expose only 'shiny surfaces' whilst masking a reality inhabited by sociopolitical crises will inevitably leave a mark on how psychological distress and trauma are perceived and dealt with. By setting unattainable standards and silencing painful experiences those vulnerable will collapse under the weight of socioeconomic disadvantage and the social imaginary.

Moving forward, Dr Ikkos advocates for a holistic approach of mental disorders beyond the biopsychosocial paradigm by incorporating political theory and social science in the training and education of psychiatrists. Another idea is to rethink and

use technological advances as tools for generating new knowledge and improving quality of care, rather than as weapons for distorting reality and misconstruing distress.

The second part of the talk was introduced by Dr Jed Boardman, visiting Senior Lecturer in Social Psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London.

He co-authored the book 'Social Inclusion and Mental Health: Understanding poverty, inequality and social exclusion' which was published in second edition in December 2022 and puts once more on the agenda the meaning of consequences of social marginalization in those suffering from a mental illness. He emphasizes how poverty and inequality give rise to increasing differences in life expectancy across various areas of the UK, even within the same area such as Glasgow, where there is a 28-year gap between male life expectancy in the poor areas compared to the wealthiest.

Why are thus social hierarchy and mental health so intertwined? I discovered that one way to look at this dyadic relationship is through the lens of reciprocal determinism, a social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura. He posits that a person's behaviour influences their environment, whose consequences might condition behaviour in a continuous, reciprocal spiral.

This concept can act as a framework to understand social determinants of mental health in the context of life circumstances and choices which impact on morbidity; which in turn exacerbates disadvantage and can contribute to even poorer choices and health outcomes. To name just a few, access to education and employment, infrastructure, early life adversity and violence as a means of coping shape and model mental health practices in marginalized groups, and lead to premature mortality in those with severe mental illness.

Deprivation and poverty equally have psychological implications such as poor understanding of one's own needs, of mental distress and not seeking support, which delays access to appropriate treatment.

Dr Boardman concisely summarizes these points by clarifying how poverty is a cause of mental ill health and equally a result of it. He cites the AESOP Study to demonstrate excess of psychosis deriving from psychosocial vulnerabilities in marginalized ethnic groups. These vulnerabilities such as ambiguous cultural identity, unemployment and social isolation create an environment for mental illness to develop which in turn perpetuates vulnerabilities and gives rise to others.

It is perhaps worth to consider how stigma and marginalization cause a myriad of conflicting feelings and states of mind such as shame, humiliation and dehumanization that serve to separate the mental disordered population from a presumed 'sane' one. Pernicious effects of stigma erode the sense of community and togetherness within a society and widen the gap between social classes, leading to more inequality.

The talk is ended by citing Rudolf Virchow's quote from the beginning, who himself believed that social inequality is the root cause of mental ill health. He viewed medicine as social science and purported and implied that doctors should be politicians. Dr Boardman considers how his quote summarizes public health's biggest idea such that human health and disease are the embodiment of the success and failure of society as a whole. Would it mean that to improve health and reduce disease is to change society?

What would entail in these times, to abandon political neutrality and move towards a politically active stance as psychiatrists? Is it not supporting political parties whilst being involved in political activism, and redefining the identity of psychiatrists as sentinels of this medical branch? Rethinking power in the context of mental distress and what empowering patients means? Advocating for parity of esteem and understanding sources of stigma are only two tentacles of a giant octopus who seems to be increasing in size and demanding desperate recognition: that mental distress is real in an era of meta-truths and perhaps one of the most powerful narratives of recovery and survival.

In the discussion that followed, it was eloquently suggested we should embed political discourse in elementary terms when speaking to patients and their 'allies'. This is how biopsychosocial formulations can become biopsychopolitical formulations in our attempt to tackle and uproot inequality and its damaging consequences.

To end on a reflective note about poverty and deprivation, I would like to make reference to a monumental book which painstakingly deals with social stratification at profound and specific levels: 'The Road to Wigan Pier' by George Orwell. He was perhaps one of the few to understand that socialism is about addressing socio-economic inequality and improving the lives of disadvantaged people by being with them and understanding what deprivation truly signifies.

References

- 1 Goffman, E. (2007). Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (1st ed.). Routledge.
- 2 Wing JK, Brown GW Institutionalism and Schizophrenia: A Comparative Study of Three Mental Hospital, 1970 Cambridge University Press (pg. 1960-1968)
- 3 Coid J. Failure in community care: psychiatry's dilemma. BMJ. 1994 Mar 26;308(6932):805-6.
- 4 Care Programme Approach NHS England position statement 1 March 2022 Version 2.0

EPSIG and PhilSIG host Dr Iain McGilchrist at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 5th of April 2024

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Introduction

Dr Iain McGilchrist is a retired psychiatrist and author who was invited to discuss his academic work on the 5th April 2024 at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The event was jointly hosted by the evolutionary psychiatry and philosophy special interest groups of the College. Before we offer some insights into the character of the event, we will provide a brief overview of the key themes of McGilchrist's work. For a full review of his first major work, we would encourage readers to revisit Dr David Geaney's excellent article in Edition 4 of the EPSIG Newsletter (September 2016, available free on the EPSIG webpage of the RCPsych website).

Synopsis

In his 2009 work *The Master and his Emissary*, McGilchrist seeks to approach the subject matter of hemispheric differences in a sophisticated and refined manner, noting early on that this is a scientific area that has long suffered reductive and grossly oversimple explorations. His fundamental argument, seeking to infuse much-needed nuance and precision, rests on the idea that the right and left cerebral hemispheres must perform their different "functions" harmoniously, but that this balance is

precarious and liable to disruption. Conventionally, the left hemisphere is viewed as “dominant”, partly because it is the site of language. McGilchrist laments this over-valuation of the left hemisphere, arguing eloquently that this situation is directly antithetical to what is really the case; the rightful master is indeed the right hemisphere. But, like the ambitious emissary to a king, the left hemisphere is constantly tugging away from the primacy of the right hemisphere, over-confident and over-optimistic in its abilities, desperate to materialise its “take” on the external world.

McGilchrist proceeds, then, to argue that important transition periods in the history of Western civilisation can be understood through the lens of hemispheric imbalance. Seen in this way, important cultural turning points reflect characteristic shifts in an ongoing power-struggle between left and right hemispheres. The result of these back-and-forth oscillations, occurring subtly over hundreds of years, is an ever-changing cultural landscape, whereby the prevailing cultural zeitgeist of the time is in large part dictated by the exact hemispheric balance. McGilchrist’s libratory philosophy of history reaches its apotheosis in the here-and-now, where he presents a bleak vision of the West’s future if it continues down its current path of untrammelled left-hemisphere dominance.

McGilchrist’s latest work, released in 2021, and entitled *The Matter with Things*, is a development of his earlier thinking where he elaborates upon the psychiatric, epistemological and ontological underpinnings of his decades-long scholarship in the field of hemispheric studies.

Session 1: Hemisphere theory and the implications for psychiatry

On the day, McGilchrist was in good form and humour, presenting his work and answering questions with characteristic sophistication and eloquence for close to 7 hours during the afternoon sessions and dinner afterwards. The first session was focused primarily on the psychiatric implications of his work; it’s worth recapitulating some of the important differences in how the two brains experience the world.

The left hemisphere, having evolved for manipulation, employs language and abstract theorising to reconstruct a context-independent world in which it is not directly present. It is more interested in objects, than in relations; in the explicit rather than the implicit; in the static as opposed the dynamic. Its impressive abilities for language, and its narrow attentional focus on the world, allows it to experience and re-present in mind a propositional knowledge of the world, one that is decontextualised, devitalised and

neatly categorised according to rules of logic. It views objects as parts or aggregates of parts, rather than irreducible wholes, and has little appreciation of the “flow” or “betweenness” of the world. In this pursuit, it is an effective emissary; the real master, however, is the right hemisphere, that can see the bigger picture – a dynamic, flowing, contextualised world, rich in colour, texture and life. This is the world of metaphor, of creativity, of connectedness to the world out there, of which we are more than just a “part of”. In the world of the right hemisphere, the particulars of existence, as opposed to abstracted universals and generalisations, matter more. It follows that, whilst the left hemisphere adheres to only base values of utility, the right hemisphere is animated by beauty, a sense of the sacred and of public service, by love, poetry, awe. For the right hemisphere, “being” in the world is a direct and reciprocal participation, whilst for the left hemisphere it can only ever be an impoverished, virtualised and mechanical abstraction.

After briefly rehearsing this distinction, McGilchrist proceeded to outline the empirical research demonstrating hemispheric predominance in various neuropsychiatric conditions. In a particularly captivating segment, he referenced phenomenological research on schizophrenia by French psychiatrist Eugene Minkowski (1885-1972), who characterised the “vital loss of contact with reality” as the central “generative essence” of derangements in the underlying form of the psychopathology. Minkowski referred to a distinction between atrophy and hypertrophy of function, which McGilchrist noted correlates to the distinction between right hemispheric dysfunction and left hemispheric gain of function, particularly manifest in the schizophrenic’s approach to feeling (atrophy) vs thinking (hypertrophy), time (atrophy) vs space (hypertrophy), and “life” (atrophy) vs “map” (hypertrophy).

Session 2: Philosophical implications on the humane practice of medicine

In the second half of the afternoon, McGilchrist went on to discuss the wider philosophical implications of his work, and how they pertain to the humane clinical practice of psychiatry. Although once again extraordinarily vast in its scope, his presentation may be summarised as an exceptional scientific mind emphatically cautioning against the overreach of an exclusively scientific world view. This entailed a fascinating discussion of epistemology and ontology. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy which investigates the nature and extent of human knowledge, whilst ontology concerns itself with understanding the nature of reality; what really exists. His

ideas on both of these domains of philosophical enquiry followed clearly from his account of differential hemispheric function.

Although he was speaking clearly of the important value of scientific knowledge, McGilchrist sought to argue that there are at the same time profound limitations to this left-brain-dominant view of life; especially if it is mistakenly believed to constitute the only valid means of knowledge, given the left hemisphere's monopoly on language. Indeed, through the lens of an overconfident left-hemisphere, ideas such as value, purpose, and the sacred are destined only to be broken down, picked apart, and rejected as illusory. McGilchrist argued that we must recognise this left-hemisphere take as just one type of knowledge, which can only provide a partial account of what is. An epistemology that only allows as true that which can be expressed explicitly in language as a series of propositions, intolerant of ambiguity and contradiction, accordingly makes for a deeply impoverished view of life. For McGilchrist then, the often side-lined implicit and ineffable knowledge of the right-brain is of the most fundamental importance; our direct and intuitive senses of value, purpose, and the sacred are not illusions, but really do exist.

Correspondingly, he went on to talk about the great importance of psychiatrists expanding their knowledge and worldview beyond just the limited view of human life that can be captured in its scientific representation. He spoke passionately about the beauty immanent in the natural world and art - particularly poetry and music - as portals to this kind of knowledge of the world, and argued that only through immersing themselves in this can psychiatrists begin to practise with the humanity required to heal their patients.

Concluding thoughts from an evolutionary perspective

As evolutionary psychiatrists, there are some deeply challenging ideas bound up in McGilchrist's arguments. Such is our appreciation of, and enthusiasm for, evolutionary theory, that there's perhaps an ever-present tendency to wish to reduce all explanations of the human condition to evolutionary ones. McGilchrist would seemingly urge us to reject such tendencies. Thinking about things in evolutionary terms, whilst undoubtedly of great importance and utility, must always ultimately be in the service of the humane practice of psychiatry. It is of great interest to me to note that there seems to be a deep resonance between this line of thinking and Darwin's reflections on his life's work, meditated upon in a short autobiography only intended for close family.

"I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great, delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music. Music generally sets me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure. I retain some taste for fine scenery, but it does not cause me the exquisite delight which it formerly did... This curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder, as books on history, biographies, and travels (independently of any scientific facts which they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts... if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

Concluding thoughts from a philosophical perspective

McGilchrist's work is a veritable tour de force, with profound implications for the nature of the longstanding divide in philosophy between continental and analytic thinking, and how these fields approach the mind. The former, with Husserl's phenomenology as an exemplar, seeks to build up a knowledge of the world by starting from the inside of a subject and looking out, utilising in its methodology a rich and diverse vocabulary and grammar. Heavily reliant on metaphor, continental philosophy has no other option available to it given the limitations of language in describing internal mental experience; its subject matter is ineffable.

Contrast this to the traditional epistemology of the scientific method, which privileges increasingly accurate mathematical modelling of the "external" physical and biological worlds. Here, language is used precisely, to describe repeatable and objective phenomena that accord to some sort of clear causality in their interactions. When it comes to scientific conceptions of the mind, the modern day empirical

enterprises of neurobiology and psychology adopt an “outwards-in” approach, in stark contrast to the “inwards-out” methodology of phenomenology.

What’s interesting, however, is that it can be argued these two “takes” on the human mind very closely resemble what McGilchrist asserts the hemispheres are doing. Their different takes may be at core summarised by either a predominant focus on objects (left; man as decontextualised-object-like-any-other) or on the relations between them (right; man as subject-in-context or being-in-the-world). Perhaps the lesson here is that to truly understand the world around us, and our own minds central in creating it, we must attempt to bridge both takes, both epistemologies, and strive towards a “neuropsychological” approach that allows the master and his emissary to exist within perfect symbiosis, if we are to truly understand the mind, and by implication the abnormal mental processes that cause untold suffering to our patients. It is our contention also that all approaches to both the mind and mental phenomena must be subsumed within an evolutionary framework, for (and it is a self-evident truism by now) nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.

FUTURE EVENTS SECTION

Emerging philosophical themes in psychiatry and mental health care: Navigating the era of machine learning and generative AI

2nd of October 2024, Online via EventsAir platform of the RCPSYCH.

[Philosophy SIG Annual Conference: Emerging philosophical themes in psychiatry and mental health \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](https://rcpsych.ac.uk)

The Philosophy Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists is thrilled to remind you of our highly expected upcoming conference, "Emerging Philosophical Themes in Psychiatry and Mental Healthcare: Navigating the Era of Machine Learning and Generative AI," taking place online on Wednesday, 2 October 2024". Since its inception, the primary goal of this conference is to create an event that will help its attendees develop the reflective ability to engage with technologies that are expected to cause significant disruption in most aspects of human activity, including healthcare. This is not a conference just for clinicians working in mental health, but also for every stakeholder involved, trying to tackle its complexity by embracing technological advances such as those emerging in the field of artificial intelligence.

Our confirmed distinguished line of speakers includes prominent researchers and thinkers in the field of artificial intelligence such as **Prof Melanie Mitchell** and **Prof**

Murray Shanahan, a distinguished scholar such as **Dr Iain McGilchrist**, and philosophers working in the intersection of the fields of neuroscience, artificial intelligence and mental health such as **Prof Shaun Gallagher**, **Dr Mazviita Chirimuuta** and **Dr Ines Hipolito**. A discussion panel with mental health professionals expressing the views on the current conversation on AI and its impact in mental healthcare is included in the final programme.

This event will be taking place online via a platform called EventsAir. Registered participants will receive their link to join the conference in their joining instructions. Pre-conference material will be available to help with navigation of the interdisciplinary enquiry that will take place in the day. **All registered participants will also have access to this conference recording for up to 12 weeks post event**

Info about the speakers

Prof Melanie Mitchell is one of the most prominent experts in the field of AI and author among others of the book “Artificial Intelligence: A guide for thinking humans”. She is a Professor at the Santa Fe Institute. Her current research focuses on conceptual abstraction and analogy-making in artificial intelligence systems. For a comprehensive profile visit the link below

Melanie Mitchell



Iain McGilchrist is a fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, literary scholar, philosopher and neuroscientist who recently published his magnum opus “The Matter with Things” an in-depth elaboration on the themes pursued in his 2009 book “The Master and His Emissary”, subtitled “The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World”. Iain McGilchrist’s work has focused on brain hemispheric differences and the way they frame our attention to the world and understanding of it. He is a true polymath and a deep thinker. For a comprehensive profile and insights into his work visit the link below

Portal - Iain McGilchrist (channelmcgilchrist.com)



Prof Murray Shanahan is a principal research scientist at Google DeepMind and Professor of Cognitive Robotics at Imperial College London. Educated at Imperial College (BSc(Eng) computer science, 1984) and Cambridge University (King’s College; PhD computer science, 1988), he became a full professor at Imperial in 2006,

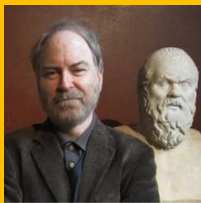
and joined DeepMind in 2017. His publications span artificial intelligence, machine learning, logic, dynamical systems, computational neuroscience, and philosophy of mind. He was scientific advisor on the film Ex Machina. He has written several books, including “Embodiment and the Inner Life” (2010) and “The Technological Singularity” (2015). For a comprehensive profile and insights into his work visit the link below

[Murray Shanahan - Imperial College London \(ic.ac.uk\)](#)



Prof Shaun Gallagher is the Lillian and Morrie Moss Professor of Excellence. His areas of research include phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, especially topics related to embodiment, self, agency and intersubjectivity, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of time. Over the years he had numerous collaborations and held positions with academic institutions worldwide. He is the founding editor and co-editor in chief of the Journal “Phenomenology and Cognitive sciences”. He is the author of many books in the field of phenomenology and philosophy of mind and one of the major proponents of enactivism. His last book is called “The self and its disorders”. For a comprehensive profile and insights into his work visit the link below

[Shaun Gallagher - Philosophy - The University of Memphis](#)



Dr Mazviita Chirimuuta is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences. She has a PhD in visual neuroscience at Cambridge, graduating in 2004. Her work is mainly concerned with philosophical issues around vision, mind-brain relationship and consciousness. Her last book, published in 2024 by MIT Press is called “The brain abstracted: simplification in the history and philosophy of neuroscience” [The Brain AbstractedSimplification in the History and Philosophy of Neuroscience | Books Gateway | MIT Press](#) is open access and an illuminating read in understanding the limits of simplification when engaging with complex systems such as the brain. For a comprehensive profile visit the link below

[Mazviita Chirimuuta – Research output — University of Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)



Dr Ines Hipolito is a lecturer(assistant professor) of Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence at Macquarie University. Her research, focusing on E-Cognition and how it can help understand and design augmented forms of cognition (e.g. brain-computer interfaces, neurotechnologies and smart environments). Her main interests are in Philosophy of Mind, E-Cognition, Complexity science, Artificial Intelligence and artificial life. For a comprehensive profile and insights into his work visit the link below

[Ines Hipolito — Macquarie University \(mq.edu.au\)](https://www.mq.edu.au/people/ines-hipolito)



We are confident that the depth of interdisciplinary approach offered will provide a rewarding and illuminating experience to all of you who will decide to join us for the conference. As suggested earlier in the welcome note please send comments on themes and questions you would like to see explored in the conference at philosophysig@gmail.com .

6th International Symposium: Evolutionary Psychiatry Special Interest Group

22nd of November 2024, In person at Royal College of Psychiatry

[https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/events/conferences/detail/2024/11/22/default-calendar/6th-international-symposium--evolutionary-psychiatry-special-interest-group-\(epsig\)](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/events/conferences/detail/2024/11/22/default-calendar/6th-international-symposium--evolutionary-psychiatry-special-interest-group-(epsig))

The Evolutionary Psychiatry SIG will be holding its 6th International Symposium at the RCPsych in London with a stellar line-up of speakers. The keynote speakers have a unique mix of expertise and backgrounds including philosophy, psychology, primatology and of course, psychiatry. The symposium offers a unique opportunity to listen to and meet eminent speakers and delegates from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. Take a look at the programme below. Booking is open.

[epsig-conference-programme-2024.pdf \(rcpsych.ac.uk\)](#)

Advances in the Psychopathology of Schizophrenia and Related Psychoses

23rd of January 2025 – In person

<https://www.york.ac.uk/business/cpd/sector-specific-courses/psychopathology-of-schizophrenia-related-psychoses/>

This face to face one day short course will focus on Advances in the psychopathology of schizophrenia and related psychoses. Places are limited and early registration is advised, don't miss out, book your place today!

The course will enable participants to:

- To view schizophrenia and related psychoses in the context of profound transformations of subjectivity and selfhood, usually beyond presentations of psychotic symptoms.
- To understand and appraise evidence for delusions in schizophrenia that are not fully conceptualised as fixed, false beliefs, taking into account the experiential dimension and altered senses of self and reality.
- To appreciate meaningfulness and potential benefits of delusional thinking in psychoses, including how delusions could act as protective factors against a total dissolution of oneself.
- To reconsider definitions of hallucinations in schizophrenia and be familiar with the non-sensory features of hallucinations that may impact their assessment and treatment, especially in the context of first-episode psychosis.
- To understand and appraise insight in psychosis and its clinical relevance, and to reflect on the extent to which insight is based on brain function.

Apart the course leader **Dr Clara Humptson**, tutors are **Prof Anthony David**, **Dr Rosa Ritunnano** and **Dr Jasper Feyearts**.

After Kraepelin: Ambitions, Images, Practices and the History of Psychiatry 1926-2026

Thursday 6th and Friday 7th of March, Royal Society of Medicine

<https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/psychiatry/2024-25/pyt02/>

For Philosophy SIG members there is a 40% discount.

Use code 40PYT02 – it will be available to use at checkout when registering for the meeting. Members of the Philosophy SIG will be able to register at a reduced rate using this code. At present, you can register your interest for the meeting and will be notified once registrations are open.

Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) is probably the single most significant figure in the history of psychiatry and, certainly, one of a handful of most impactful psychiatrists to have shaped the profession. 1926 marks 100 years since his death and this event will be an opportunity to recall his contribution and focus on significant changes since. The last century has been an incredibly fertile time for research in psychiatry but also an era during which some of its most fundamental assumptions have been challenged by its own findings in biomedical and clinical research, those of affine disciplines in social science and the humanities and the service users movement.

This two-day event will review the ambitions, images and practices of psychiatry, as they have evolved during the period under review and seek pointers for continuity and transformation in the future. It will be privileged by an exceptionally diverse group of speakers, all outstanding in their field, whether as psychiatrists, other clinicians, academics in the humanities and social sciences or service users.

By attending the meeting, you will:

- Learn about the history of psychiatry during the last 100 years.
- Be able to reflect on long term changes in the methodology and scientific approach to psychiatry.
- Find out about diverse perspectives, threats and opportunities for research and practice in psychiatry and mental health in the future.

Educational resources

Oxford Textbook of Philosophy of Psychiatry

This is a goodie that will be a perennial item in the newsletter. In the link below, as found in the INPP website, you will find full access to The Oxford Textbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry. There is an immense wealth of philosophical topics in it. You can read and download parts of it, or as a complete document.

<https://inpponline.com/resources-home/literature-and-full-text-downloads/the-oxford-textbook-of-philosophy-and-psychiatry/>