

Nordiskt Sommaruniversitet

Psychoanalysis and Politics: 'Exclusion and the Politics of Representation' Call for papers – winter symposium in Copenhagen 19th to 21st of March 2010

Thinking psychoanalytically about the nature of social exclusion involves a self-questioning on the part of the interpreter. While we may all have some experiences of having been subject to stereotyping, silencing, discrimination or exclusion, it is also the case that, as social beings, we all, to some extent, participate in upholding these practices, often unconsciously. In beginning to analyse transference, Freud, by moving his own authority into the open, made the functioning of power into a topic for reflection. This topic extends into the question of what power, or violence goes into the making of the 'I'; how do the boundaries that separate self from other come into being? Freud described how the familiar and old-established in the mind becomes alienated from it through repression; *"From the idea of 'homelike', 'belonging to the house', the further idea is developed of something withdrawn from the eyes of strangers, something concealed, secret; and this idea is expanded in many ways..."*, thus what was originally *heimlich* became *unheimlich*.

If we think of the 'I' as composed out of a set of identifications, we may ask to what extent exclusion, or 'false projections' are necessary parts of the process of formation of identity and group-attachments. Do we need to exclude others to love and feel secure in our identity and belonging? If it is true that excluding the other and part of oneself from recognition are closely interrelated, one may ask how this evolves in social space, and how the effects of the process on both sides of the relation of misrecognition can be described.

One may ask how psychoanalysis can be used to think about the invisible and subtle processes of power over symbolic representation, in the context of stereotyping and dehumanization: What forces govern the state of affairs that determine who is an 'I' and who is an 'it' in the public sphere?

Thinking in terms of 'containment', a communication which is denied a social space for expression can be said to be actively stripped of meaning. Through its original contribution of attending to, and interpreting material that so far had seemed meaningless, psychoanalysis has demonstrated a capacity to reinstall meaning where none was before – but how are such acts performed on a social level?

Psychoanalysis has given us concepts allowing for the perception of phenomena such as displacement and repression, though conceptualization of their social manifestations stands in need of further development. When common responsibility is displaced onto a suitable class or group and its representatives, the end point is reached when the individual is objectified and the social aspects of the process are no longer recognized. His or her position becomes an illegitimate one from which to speak – the person's subjectivity is excluded. How can we conceive of the 'how' and the 'why' of this phenomenon and of possible counter-gestures?

This is an interdisciplinary conference – we invite theoretical contributions and historical, literary or clinical case studies on these and related themes from philosophers, sociologists, psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, literary theorists, historians and others. Perspectives from different psychoanalytic schools will be most welcome. Papers must not be previously published and must be available for publication in the planned conference book.

Presentations are expected to take half an hour; another 30 minutes is set aside for discussion. Please send an abstract of 200 to 300 words to psychoanalysis.politics@gmail.com by December 1st 2009.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

Lene Auestad

Philosopher, University of Oslo/ Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities/ currently London, *and*

Håvard Nilsen

Intellectual Historian from the University of Oslo, has written on the history of psychoanalysis.

CO-ARRANGER:

Elisabeth Mork

Consultant, Changing Faces, London.

This is a relatively small symposium where active participation is encouraged. Researchers, post-graduate students and professionals are invited to attend and present their work in a friendly and enjoyable social atmosphere. A participation fee, which includes a shared dinner, of 500 NOK/600 SEK/440 DKK/€ 60/£ 55/\$ 86 is to be paid before the symposium. Additional information in this regard will be given after your abstract has been accepted.

By placing the conference in Copenhagen we wish to pay tribute to the Danish critic and scholar Georg Morris Cohen Brandes (1842-1927), the founder of Cultural Radicalism in Scandinavia.

The conference is funded by The Nordic Summer University, which supports Nordic and International research networks. The Nordic Summer University in turn receives its funding from The Nordic Ministerial Council. For further information, please see <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/pages/information/briefly-in-english.php>

The organizers would like to thank The Norwegian Psychoanalytical Society.

NON-EXCLUSIVE LIST OF RELEVANT LITERATURE:

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