

Call for Articles:

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Speculations of the Unconscious: Encounters between Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, Literature and the Arts

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The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘speculation’ (from Latin *specere*: to look (at), observe; *speculum*: mirror) as ‘the faculty or power of seeing; sight, vision’ or ‘the exercise of the faculty of sight; the action, or an act, of seeing, viewing, or looking on or at; examination or observation’. Taking into account the intimate connection between the mental/ideal and visual/physical facets of ‘speculation’, the aim of this issue is to invite reflections on/of the strange encounters between philosophy, psychoanalysis, literature and the arts, exploring in this ongoing exchange new angles and ways of looking into the (textual, visual, philosophical, psychoanalytic) unconscious.

The unconscious (*das Unbewusste*) is, from an etymological perspective, that which is unknown: an invisible ‘entity’, first explored by philosophers, which works underneath the reasonable crust of our diurnal consciousness. Although Leibniz with his ‘small perceptions’ (*New Essays on Human Understanding*) and Kant with his ‘dark representations’ (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*) are among the first Western thinkers who acknowledged the possibility of the unconscious, it is with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche that the saga of Western philosophy moved away from the hegemony of reason to the admission of an unlit zone of the psyche, to which one has only a mediate access.

Schopenhauer’s relationship between will and intellect anticipated Freud’s connection between the id and the ego. Furthermore, the ego is excluded from the machinations of the id and only finds out afterwards what the game plan is: ‘In fact, the intellect remains so much excluded from the real resolutions and secret decisions of its own will that sometimes it can only get to know them, like those of a stranger, by spying out and taking unawares...’ (*The World as Will and Representation*). Likewise, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche argued that the post-Socratic hegemony of reason was but a long bad dream: ‘For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself; only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our mind’s activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt’.

Influenced by Schopenhauer’s and Nietzsche’s courageous *Kehre*, Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung began drawing a map of this newly discovered field. With his *Studies on Hysteria* (co-authored with Josef Breuer) and *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud developed

the first method for analysing this dark territory, making psychoanalysis a method of decrypting the unconscious which teaches us to be suspicious and actively prepare for the hidden outbursts of the id.

Studies on Hysteria and *The Interpretation of Dreams* make the same basic point (an argument which Freud and Jung always agreed upon): what is projected (the appearance, the mask, the persona) is a disguise (mildly put) or a falsification (strongly put) of what really is (the essence, the face). What one sees (the phenomenal reality) is a displacement of the inner reality. Moving from the mask of the ego to the symptomatology of the id, *Studies on Hysteria* was published in the same year as the first commercial screening of the Lumière brothers' films. Indeed, film may be seen as a way of describing the unconscious, and examples from George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977), masterminded by the Jungian Joseph Campbell, to Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021), combining depth psychology with political theology, may show that 'Freud's America' is significantly larger, wilder and more perilous than anticipated.

If philosophy was traditionally unaware of the hidden domination of unconscious thought, similarly to films, literature has always intuitively felt what philosophy and psychology failed to conceptualize until the 19th century. From the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to *Faustus*, from the Greek tragedy to the Surrealist manifestoes, one finds several access points to the unconscious.

What we may not know yet is, as Morpheus famously puts it to Neo in *The Matrix*, 'how deep the rabbit hole goes'. Several branches of psychoanalysis derived from Freud's structural topology of the psyche have attempted to map and develop this hidden 'Wonderland', from Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and Didier Anzieu, to Jacques Lacan, Jean Laplanche, Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, or Slavoj Žižek, among others, but also trauma theory scholars like Dori Laub, Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dominick LaCapra, as well as literary and film theorists of various persuasions. In the wake of Shoshana Felman's epoch-making 1977 issue of *Yale French Studies* titled *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise*, there have been many attempts to keep up the critical spirit of an alternative 'analysis' of literary texts, including Elissa Marder's fortieth anniversary Special Issue on 'Literature and Psychoanalysis: Open Questions' in *Paragraph*, which was meant to reassess the importance of the liberal arts, and of literature in particular, in higher education (see Felman's 'Preface (To Reopen the Question)').

A comparably generous list of titles could be adduced on the interface between psychoanalysis and cinema or film studies, as well as psychoanalysis and the visual arts.

Suzanne Dow and Colin Wright's edited issue 'Psychoanalysis and the Posthuman' (*Paragraph*) brought readers towards 'a psychoanalytic reading of the Posthuman'.

However, using a foundational psychoanalytic concept, such as the unconscious, as the speculative cornerstone of a broader polylogue involving philosophy, literature and the (visual) arts, past, present and future, remains a hitherto relatively uncharted territory.

In an age when not only 'speculative realism' but also speculative fiction and speculative arts are emerging as fields of enquiry and experimentation, we welcome proposals on 'speculation' and 'reflection', variously construed across the philosophical, critical and aesthetic spectrums, in relation to 'unconscious productions' understood in the broadest possible sense.

Topics of interest include, but are not restricted to:

- Emergent reimaginings of the unconscious across different aesthetic platforms;
- Neuro/bio/technologies of our present and future unconscious;
- Gender, class and race constructions of the unconscious and its drives;
- The unconscious, post-Apocalyptic fantasies of extinction and posthumanism;
- The unconscious as a site for unreason vs a deeper form of *logos* and reason(ing);
- The relation between a (Freudian) personal unconscious, including possible transpersonal, archetypal layers to this primary id, and a (Jungian) collective unconscious;
- Artistic productions as a dramatization and/or 'self-realization of the unconscious' (Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*);
- How is the unconscious, but also correlated notions and/or critical concepts like the sublime, the Uncanny, acting out vs. working through, mourning and melancholy, negation, repression or foreclosure, explored in speculative fiction, cinema and art?
- What do various media, intermedia/transmedia and remediation practices, teach us about the unconscious as well as the relation between unconscious and conscious processes?
- How do alternate reality narratives and games explore the unconscious across multiverses/pluriverses?
- How do we remember? How do we forget? The unconscious and/in Memory Studies.

We welcome interdisciplinary approaches, ranging across critical theory, literary and cultural studies, as well as other relevant disciplines in the humanities. Contributors are advised to follow the journal's submission guidelines and stylesheet, which can be downloaded from the journal's website at <http://jls1.upg-ploiesti.ro/>. The deadline for abstract submission is 30 October 2022. Please send 500-word proposals, alongside a short (max. 10-line) biographical note, to the journal editors, who will answer any queries you may have. Articles selected for publication must be submitted by 30 March 2023. All submitted articles will be blind-refereed except when invited. Accepted articles will be returned for post-review revisions by 30 May 2023 and will be expected back in their final form by 30 July 2023 at the latest.

Proposals and articles should be sent as attachments to the journal's editors (anionescu@sjtu.edu.cn and milesi@sjtu.edu.cn) as well as to this special issue's guest editor (stefan.bolea@gmail.com).