

The Centre for the History of European Discourses

Annual Report 2009

Following an extremely busy six months leading up to the end of 2008, a record-setting period in which CHED ran four major conferences, the first half of 2009 has been a period of successful consolidation for CHED.

Continuing our tradition of conferences held at the Monash Centre in Prato, Italy, a symposium on the uses of European law in colonial contexts was convened by CHED Deputy Director Professor Ian Hunter. At the University of Queensland a semester-long seminar series focusing on the Intellectual History of Medicine allowed CHED researchers on the History of Sexuality to open up conversations with colleagues working in other areas of the history of medicine.

Seminars and Conferences

Transpositions of Empire

On 20-22 April 2009 Ian Hunter co-directed a symposium on the uses of European law in colonial contexts. Ian's co-director for the 'Trans-positions of Empire' symposium, held at the Monash Centre, Prato, was Shaunnagh Dorsett of the Victoria University of Wellington, with the event being co-sponsored by CHED and the Law Faculty of the VUW. This symposium was noteworthy for its international character — presenters coming from New Zealand, Canada, the USA, the UK, and Australia — and for the manner in which it combined legal history with the history of political thought.

Public seminar series

Semester 1

Issues in the Intellectual History of Medicine:

For some time CHED has been focussing on the history of sexual medicine and on raising questions about the emergence of medical concepts over the time. The well attended public seminar series has engaged with colleagues from history of medicine. Important contributions came from Dr Ivan Crozier (Edinburgh) 'Koro, Genital Theft, or Whizz-Dick? Psychiatry, Culture-Bound Syndromes, and Penis-Shrinking Anxieties'; Dr Hans Pols (Sydney) 'Tropical Medicine, and Acclimatisation and Race in the Dutch East Indies'; Prof. Paul Turnbull (HPRC) 'An Out of the Way Intellectual: Edward Charles Stirling and Aboriginal Australian Morphology, c. 1890-1911'; Dr Sally Wilde (HPRC) 'Knowledge, Power, and Germs: The Rhetoric of Science and the Realities of Medical Practice'. From CHED: Dr. Chiara Beccalossi 'Female Same-Sex Desires: A Developing Pathology in Nineteenth Century Europe'; Prof. Peter Cryle 'Vaginismus in the Nineteenth Century: A Franco-American Story'; Dr Heather Wolffram "An Object of Vulgar Curiosity": Stage Mesmerism, Lay Hypnotism and Medicine in Wilhelmine Germany'. This series was organised by Peter Cryle and Chiara Beccalossi.

CHED is working to publish the papers as a special issue of a journal in the history of medicine.

Semester 2

New Developments in Intellectual History.

The series focused on the variety of new and interesting developments currently occurring in the field of intellectual history in the wake of the reconstruction of 'ideas' in terms of the uses of texts, and the reworking of these uses in terms of an open-ended array of contextual interests and purposes.

Presenters included: Peter Harrison (Oxford); Simon During (Johns Hopkins); Ian Hunter (CHED), Philip Almond (CHED); Michael Ure (CHED); and Conal Condren (CHED).

To facilitate a deeper engagement with the material, papers are being circulated in advance of the seminars; the presenter's work is responded to by a nominated discussant before the floor is opened to questions.

Postgraduate Mini Conference

CHED's first semester Postgraduate Mini Conference took place on the afternoon of 28 May with papers from three postgraduates who provided their audience with a taste of their current research. Anne Le Guinio began proceedings by looking at Foucault's conceptualisation of power in relation to postcolonial theory, applying these ideas specifically to Francophone African writing. In the discussion that followed, Anne highlighted the problems, particularly of audience and marketability, that exist for those authors who choose not to write in a postcolonial mould. Next up was Michael Pearce who introduced us to Thai spirit houses, postulating their significance within what Thai historians have called Thailand's 'crises of modernity'. Michael's paper was accompanied by photographs of spirit houses that he had collected during his ethnographic work in Thailand. The final paper of the afternoon was given by Sue Kentlyn who spoke about the performance of gender, evaluating in particular the identity theories of scholars, such as Butler and Goffman. In response to the questions that followed, Sue linked her discussion of theory with her work in the transgender and transsexual community.

On Lying in Politics

In February 2010, CHED will host a seminar around the work of Martin Jay: *On Lying in Politics*. The seminar will address the issue of lying in politics through a range of philosophical, ethical and historical questions: that of lying as a creative, generative political act; of normative standards for states, their agents and individuals; of different traditions of political theory's understanding and evaluation of mendacity; and of the relation between lying and delusion. The keynote speaker will be Professor Martin Jay of the University of California. Other speakers will include: Richard Devetak, Ian Hunter, Michael Janover, Marguerite La Caze, Justine McGill, and Michael Ure.

Visitors

In the first semester of 2009 CHED welcomed two notable visitors.

Fernanda Alfieri visited CHED from during March. Fernanda is a researcher at the Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Studi Storici Italo-Germanici in Trento, Italy. Her research focuses on moral discourse in theological, medical and legal sources throughout early modern Catholic Europe. Her findings on sexuality and marriage in the theological discourse of the 17th century have recently been made into a full-length book, which is forthcoming. Fernanda presented at the CHED Work in Progress series: her paper was titled "Shaping Sexualities: Shaping Sexualized Individuals in Early-Modern Catholic Europe."

Ivan Crozier also visited CHED for the month of June, presenting two papers, one each in CHED's Intellectual History of Medicine series and in our Work in Progress seminar. His work on the history of psychiatry engaged with some longstanding CHED research interests. Ivan is a Lecturer in the Science Studies Unit at the University of Edinburgh. He is also Reviews Editor (Human Sciences) for *Metascience* and on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*. His research includes work on criminal responsibility and psychiatry, psychiatry and cultural specificity, and the sexual body in history and society. Ivan has edited several collections, mostly in the history of sexuality and has produced a number of papers with a special focus on Havelock Ellis and on the medical construction of homosexuality.

Both Fernanda and Ivan rapidly became part of CHED's intellectual and social life, and we look forward to continuing to develop these relationships well into the future.

Summer Scholarships

As in previous years there was a good response with strong applications received from undergraduate students keen to engage in a short “apprenticeship in intellectual history”. The two successful applicants, Gerard Kelly and Jillian Beard will commence early in December.

New Staff

We are preparing to welcome two new colleagues in the coming months. Simon During will join us from Johns Hopkins as an ARC Professorial Fellow, and Marina Bollinger (Sydney and ANU), will take up a UQ Postdoctoral Fellowship at the beginning of 2010. Simon will lead a new CHED program on Religion and Culture, and Marina will engage in a project that links the history of religious thought to the question of the soul of woman.

Farewells

Sadly, CHED bade farewell at the end of 2008 to a longstanding member, Alison Moore, who left to take up a Senior Lectureship in Francophone Studies at UTS. Alison’s vibrant presence and rigorous engagements in the intellectual life of the Centre are keenly missed by us all.

Other News and Events

During the first half of 2009 CHED’s research staff have maintained busy and varied schedules.

On 24 October 2008, **Ian Hunter**’s recent book, *The Secularisation of the Confessional State: The Political Thought of Christian Thomasius*, was the focal text for an international symposium held at the Sussex Centre for Intellectual History at the University of Sussex.

The following week Ian presented a public lecture on Christian Thomasius at Germany’s leading Thomasius research centre, the Interdisziplinären Zentrum für die Erforschung der europäischen Aufklärung (Inter-disciplinary Centre for Research into the European Enlightenment) at the Martin Luther University of Halle.

In the week following this symposium a workshop on Ian’s research on natural law was held at the European University Institute in Florence, with Prof Hans Bödeker acting as discussant. Titled ‘Geo-Ethics, *Ius Gentium* and Natural Law: A Workshop with Ian Hunter and Hans Bödeker’, this event was chaired by the head of the EUI’s law and politics program, Prof Martin van Gelderen, and provided a forum for discussion of recent work on natural law and international law.

Elizabeth Stephens spent the first semester based in Paris, undertaking research for her forthcoming monograph, *Anatomy as Spectacle: Public Exhibitions of the Body from 1750 to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), whilst also working on a fiction project with the assistance of an Australian Council Literature Board grant. During this time, she gave a public lecture at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, as well as a guest seminar and conference paper at Birkbeck College London.

In Italy in July **Chiara Beccalossi** participated in the Eleventh Summer School on the History of the Life Sciences (Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Ischia) on the topic of ‘From Generation to Reproduction’. The school was organised by the departments of History of Science at Harvard, History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, and Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Naples. Leading international scholars gave seminars, which were attended by established scholars, postdoctoral fellows and PhD students. Chiara then spent time doing archival research at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome and Biblioteca Archiginnasio in Bologna.

Chiara has also presented several papers including ‘Female Same-Sex Desires in Nineteenth-Century European Medicine’, at a conference organised by colleagues in UQ’s History program. In addition to her paper in the Intellectual History of Medicine series, she presented a paper at the University of Otago entitled ‘Love and its Histories: Italian Perspectives’.

In July, **Peter Cryle** spent some time doing archival work in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and then delivered a paper at the University of Exeter entitled ‘Anachronistic Readings of Eighteenth-Century Libertinage in Nineteenth-Century France’.

Also in July **Ian Hunter** and **Ryan Walter** joined a group of academics helping Barry Hindess celebrate his 70th birthday. The two day symposium at Deakin University saw papers concerned with all aspects of Barry’s work, from the heady Althusserianism of the 70s to his current concern with liberalism and historical teleology. Many speakers expressed gratitude to Barry for his effect on the Australian academy.

CHED Staff Publications 2009

Peter Cryle:

[With Lisa Downing] “Feminine Sexual Pathologies”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 18, no 1, January 2009, pp. 1-7.

“‘A Terrible Ordeal from Every Point of View’: (Not) Managing Female Sexuality on the Wedding Night”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 18, no 1, January 2009, pp. 44-64.

[With Alison Moore] “Frigidity at the Fin-de-Siècle: A Slippery and Capacious Concept”. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 19, no 2, May 2010.

“Interrogating the Work of Thomas Laqueur”. *Sexualities*, vol. 12, no 4, August 2009, pp. 411-417.

“*Les Choses et les Mots*: Missing Words and Blurry Things in the History of Sexuality”. *Sexualities*, vol. 12, no 4, August 2009, pp. 439-452.

Philip Almond:

Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, paperback edition).

‘Thomas Brightman and the Origins of Philo-semitism: An Elizabethan Theologian and the Restoration of the Jews to Israel’ in *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 9(2007), pp.3-25.

Ian Hunter:

Intellectual History Review, vol. 18, no. 3, 2008. Special issue: The *Persona* of the Philosopher in the Eighteenth Century. (Co-edited with Conal Condren and Stephen Gaukroger). This contains the papers from the CHED symposium ‘The Persona of the Philosopher in 18th Century Europe’, held at the Monash Centre, Prato, in 2007.

‘Postmodern Histories’, *Intellectual History Review*, vol. 19, 2009, pp. 271-85.

‘Spirituality and Philosophy in Post-Structuralist Theory’, *History of European Ideas*, vol. 35, 2009, pp. 265-75.

Elizabeth Stephens:

Queer Writing: Homoeroticism in Jean Genet’s Fiction. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

‘Monstrous Self-Transformations: Technologies of Bodily Change from Bulwer’s *Anthropometamorphosis* to Braidotti’s *Metamorphoses*.’ *Somatechnics: Queering the Technologisation of Bodies*. London: Ashgate, 2009.

‘Flesh Machines: Postmodernism and the Self-Made Body.’ *Cultural Theory, Everyday Life*. Eds. Nicole Anderson and Katrina Schlunke. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2008. 114-121.

Michael Ure:

‘At the Crossroads of Hellenistic and Psychoanalytic Therapy: Nietzsche’s Free-Spirit Trilogy’, *New Nietzsche Studies*, 2008.

Nietzsche’s Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works (Lexington Books: 2008).

‘Post-Traumatic Societies: On Reconciliation, Justice and Emotions’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 11 (2008), pp. 283-297.

Chiara Beccalossi:

‘The Origin of Italian Sexological Studies: Female Sexual Inversion ca. 1870-1900’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 18, no.1, 2009, pp. 103-120.