

Psychoanalysis and Science: Contingency and Materialism

This workshop discusses the relation between psychoanalysis and science.

The question is not whether psychoanalysis is a science, wants to be a science, or calls science into question, but what role scientific models play within psychoanalysis. Lacan famously insisted, in 'Science and Truth', that 'the subject upon which we operate in psychoanalysis can only be the subject of science'. What, then, is this science that constitutes the subject and its suffering? Jean-Claude Milner has followed Lacan's reference to Alexandre Koyré who stated that the paradigm of modern or Galilean science is a theory of technology and technology in turn a practical application of mathematized physics. Modern science thus materializes itself in technology and its machines. Does this assertion subscribe to a materialist doctrine and how would this materialism relate to other familiar kinds of materialism, for example, historical materialism or the more recent 'new materialism'?

If, as Geneviève Morel asserts, both science and psychoanalysis search for knowledge in the Real, the question becomes, for Lacan: what is the Real?

Mai Wegener recalls: 'The Real is what one finds always at the same place. As soon as someone starts from the assumption that this Real stays in place or always returns in the same place without her doing, the possibility of science emerges. It exits from the magic relation to the Real in which the natural order is thought to depend on acts and rituals.' As a consequence, psychoanalysis becomes interested in the 'signification of chance'. As Lacan says in seminar II: 'We try to get the subject to make available to us, without any intention, his thoughts, as we say, his comments, his discourse, in other words that he should intentionally get as close as possible to chance.' The workshop intends to address this emphasis on contingency both as clinical problem and in its relation to science.

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**Friday
1 July 2016
in English**

Symposium



Psychoanalysis and Science: Contingency and Materialism

**Organized by
Michaela Wünsch;**

**co-organized by
Marcus Coelen**

Programme

Psychoanalysis and Science: Contingency and Materialism

**With
Marcus Coelen,
Monique David-Ménard,
Michael Friedman,
Kenneth Reinhard,
Samo Tomšič**

Part I

Workshop • 14:00 – 15:30

M. Friedman, S. Tomšič

Psychoanalysis, Science, and Contingency

Coffee Break

15:30 – 16:00

Part II

Workshop • 16:00 – 17:30

M. Coelen, M. David-Ménard, K. Reinhard

Science in Psychoanalysis as Materialism

Part III

Lecture • 19:30

Jean-Claude Milner

Is Lacan's Reference to Koyré and Kojève Still Fruitful?

In one of his most important contributions, 'La science et la vérité', Lacan linked the legitimacy of psychoanalysis to the construction of modern science. In order to define this 'modernity', he relied on Alexandre Koyré's famous statement: the paradigm of modern science is mathematized physics. Yet Lacan stressed the importance of Alexandre Kojève's comment on Koyré's claim: since mathematized physics is radically opposed to the Greek conception of mathematics and of physics, it needed the Christian revolution, more precisely, it was connected to the non-Greek part of Christianity, namely Judaism.