

Introduction: psychoanalysis, histories and identities

Joy Damousi and Robert Reynolds

PSYCHOANALYSIS, writes Joseph Schwartz, is ‘arguably the single most important intellectual development of the twentieth century’.¹ However one judges psychoanalysis as a practice, it is indisputable that its ideas have been historically influential in various forums for understanding interior life and accounting for human action. Over the past thirty years, psychoanalytic concepts have been re-evaluated as several disciplines have appropriated Freudian ideas to interrogate the relationships between culture, the self, identity and the unconscious. The theoretical shifts emerging from poststructuralist and postcolonialist paradigms have inspired a new look at the ways in which psychoanalytic theory can illuminate the intersection between individual and collective identity and society.

The essays in this volume are concerned with exploring the various aspects of the vexed and multifaceted relationship between psychoanalysis and history. In the simplest terms, viewing psychoanalysis and history as professional practices and as bodies of knowledge, this intersection of the two is premised on the belief that the past shapes the present. As psychoanalysis draws on individual memory of past events to unlock the unconscious, and to offer an understanding of how those ‘events . . . organise the present’, so too has recent historical work insisted that history is defined in the present, subject to rewriting and revision relevant to the preoccupations of the moment.² In these endeavours memory is the bridge shared by both psychoanalysis and history, for the processes of remembering and forgetting are central to both practices. Psychoanalysis insists on the need to explore

why and how we remember, forget and repress the things we do, whilst history is also concerned with selective memory, revision and the ways in which the narratives of the past are contingent and contested.

Historians have been notoriously resistant to uses of psychoanalytic theory because, it has been argued, figures of the past cannot be psychoanalysed.³ According to some critics, to adopt such an approach would be to venture into the realm of ‘baseless speculation’, and pursue a path of ‘irrelevance, irresponsibility, and vulgarity’.⁴ But, as Christopher Forth points out in his essay in this volume, to utilise some of Sigmund Freud’s ideas does not necessitate the application of all aspects of Freudian thought to an analysis of history. As we shall see, there is some historical work which has utilised Freudian concepts to a significant extent, but in large part historians remain ambivalent because the realm of the unconscious cannot be evidenced. Forth’s point highlights the way in which those historians who have applied psychoanalytic theory have done so eclectically and selectively.

What have historians found useful in psychoanalytic theory? Perhaps the historian who has attempted the most comprehensive application of such theory is Peter Gay. In his work *Freud for Historians* Gay argues for historians to adopt a more psychoanalytic approach to the past in order to examine the self and the irrational in history with a depth and complexity that is usually lacking in historical accounts of human behaviour. Historians have certainly ‘not been unmindful of potent irrationalities in the past’, he observes, but when compelled to deal with ‘concealed and contradictory emotions’, they have done so ‘with visible aversion, and have turned away after feeding their readers with a few observations borrowed from commonsense psychology’.⁵ Gay for one has tackled such issues directly. In his path-breaking four-volume work on the bourgeois experience, Gay uses Freud’s theories on dreams, fantasies, slips of the tongue and linguistic expressions to illuminate the intersections between the self, culture and society. In the latest volume, *The Naked Heart*, Gay explores ‘the fascinating spectacle of nineteenth-century bourgeois struggling for inwardness’,⁶ and examines ‘the nineteenth century preoccupation with the self, to the point of neurosis’.⁷ Towards this end, Gay draws on Freud’s belief that the self was both stable and unstable, in conflict, and shaped by internal as well as external forces. In looking at inner life, Gay argues that better understanding can only be found by examining the deeper ‘reaches of the mind’ which would be otherwise missed.⁸ Freud’s theorisations of the ego and superego interacting with cultural forces become the basis from which Gay explores the tensions between the individual’s needs and desires, and those of civilisation.⁹

These issues of the intersection between self, society and culture form the basis of the work of others who use psychoanalytic categories to examine past human behaviour. One of the most notable of these studies is

Lyndal Roper's pioneering work, *Oedipus and the Devil*. Roper utilises psychoanalysis to examine individual and collective subjectivity, the irrational, the unconscious and the relationship between the psychic and the physical in the context of witchcraft and early modern Europe. Like Gay, she argues that historians often write 'as if social change impinges directly and uniformly upon the individual's mental structure, as if the psyche were a kind of blank sheet for social processes to write upon'.¹⁰ In exploring the connection between the psyche and the body, Roper draws on insights from the psychoanalyst theorists Melanie Klein and Julia Kristeva to examine the boundaries between self and other. Individual subjectivity can never be understood, she writes, unless there is an understanding of the 'subjectivity of psychology'. Without making the connection between the social and the psychic, Roper asserts, historians cannot adequately conceptualise change, nor will they 'truly encounter the past'.¹¹

Feminist historians have also seen some parallels between their work and that of psychoanalysis. Sally Alexander has been at the forefront of such theorisations. Alexander argues that what is central 'to both feminism and psychoanalysis is the discovery of a subjective history through image, symbol and language'. There is, she insists, 'a close proximity between the concept of the unconscious and the unspoken histories of women's lives at the very foundation of psychoanalysis'.¹² For Alexander, the 'psychoanalytic notion of sexual difference in historical work cannot be insisted upon', as to jettison the unconscious, is to 'lose the concept of psychic instability'.¹³ Other feminist historians have also adopted this perspective, in more eclectic ways. Leonore Davidoff has, for instance, drawn on Freud to investigate the psychic states which underlie various relationships in and outside of the Victorian family.¹⁴

Another branch of history that has emerged using psychological states as theoretical categories of historical analysis is that of the history of emotions. In this field it is the psychological, rather than the psychoanalytic, that frames understanding. Jane Lewis and Peter N. Stearns write that the history of emotions 'coincides with growing interest in emotions in several branches of psychology, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology'.¹⁵ Although some in this field draw on psychoanalysis as well,¹⁶ it is the insights from psychology that inform historical analysis.¹⁷

Historians have also sought to investigate the theoretical dimensions of the relationship between history and psychoanalysis. Karl Figlio has explored the philosophical relationship between the disciplines of history and psychoanalysis. 'Psychic reality' and 'historical reality' are interrelated, he contends, and cultures as well as individuals 'hold unconscious therapeutic wishes towards both internal and external worlds'.¹⁸ Michel de Certeau has also focused on similarities between the two, noting how both

history and psychoanalysis explore the ways in which the present is shaped in the past through memory.¹⁹ Others such as Daniel Pick have placed Freud's work within broader historical writings. Focusing on the history of the crowd, Pick asks how Freud's paper on group psychology can 'bear upon nationalism and national identity'. He argues that Freud's 'foray into group psychology', 'cannot simply be consigned to the methodological past' as Freud poses problems of a political and psychological nature. Pick reflects on how Freud's work sheds light on the psychological processes of identity formation and how these are also shaped by national identifications, a theme elaborated on in Part III of this book.²⁰

In this collection our contributors are similarly preoccupied with issues of the fluid, dynamic and historical relationship between self and society. In the opening essay Catharine Coleborne takes as the focus of her study the historical understanding of 'madness' and points to the ways in which 'the inner worlds and emotional lives of the mad' remain elusive. In histories of psychoanalysis, she argues, the 'mad' are strangely absent; but the history of madness—where the emphasis has been on asylums—is an integral part of psychoanalysis and should be incorporated within it. Gender is taken as a given in this discussion, as Coleborne alerts us to the central role of femininity in any analysis of formations of identity.

Taking the examination of another type of gendered subjectivity as her starting point—that of masculinity—Joy Damousi shares this concern with the intersection between gender, psychoanalysis and history. In her examination of psychoanalysis in Australia during the interwar years, she explores the different ways in which psychoanalysis was utilised by intellectuals. Situating her argument within debates of the place of interiority within Australian culture, Damousi shows how dream analysis and issues of sexuality in particular were being read and interpreted by those Westerners who looked to Freudian frameworks to make sense of their unconscious world.

A similar but more widespread trend was under way in Britain at this time, as kylie valentine shows in her consideration of interdisciplinarity and literary representations of the self. During the interwar period, 'egoism' and the 'ego' were terms appropriated by those in upper-class British literary circles, in their modern endeavour to define and redefine the self. As valentine shows, these trends were historical: they were closely aligned to developments in psychology and philosophy, and a wider secularisation of society. The other aspect of the self being developed during the interwar years was that of the traumatic potential of memory, where many English writers became, like Freud himself, concerned with the importance of memory and non-linear time in the making of the self.

The chapters in Part I, in various ways, connect psychoanalysis to broader historical phenomena and stress the eclectic nature of psychoanalysis and the ways in which it is shaped by the moment in which it emerges. In his essay on psychoanalysis and homosexuality, Robert Reynolds investigates how psychoanalysis stigmatised homosexuals as perverse subjects for much of the twentieth century. He cites how in the years after his death Freud's liberal analytic approach to homosexuality was whittled away. This was especially marked in the United States during the late 1940s and 1950s, where a Cold War cultural conservatism held sway. In response gay, lesbian and queer activists have been equally dismissive of psychoanalytic knowledge. Reynolds argues that we need to move away from the dichotomies which have constituted these debates, and instead utilise the genuine insights into self-identity offered by such psychoanalytic theorists as Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott and Heinz Kohut. In arguing for an eclectic and creative deployment of psychoanalysis in relation to homosexuality and gender, Reynolds underlines the need for a recognition of uncertain and contingent identities and sexualities in the new millennium.

In the final piece of Part I, the problematic relationship between Freud and anthropology is thrown into sharp relief. By putting into historical context Freud's theory of the Oedipal moment, Maggie Nolan poses a timely question: how can we discuss the relationship between psychoanalysis and colonialism without considering concepts such as fantasy, desire, projection and displacement? She argues that these issues are at the very heart of the colonial project. It is to the 'disruptive potential' of psychoanalysis that Nolan turns to consider the historical development of anthropology and colonialism. To remove 'the unconscious or psychic motivation from analysis' of colonialism would be misguided. Freud's faith in science should not detract from exploring 'the psychic world of the colonising Western subject', which she argues is fundamentally a historical project which sheds significant light on our understandings of the history of colonialism.

What links these chapters is a consideration of the complex and paradoxical relationship between psychoanalysis and modernity. Taking her cue from Foucault, Coleborne traces what we might call a prehistory, or genealogy, of psychoanalysis. She situates the developmental origins of psychoanalytic theory and practice within the normalising institutions of modernity, most notably the asylum. Coleborne offers an implicit critique of contemporary historians who deploy psychoanalytic concepts. Her concern is understated but nonetheless clear. Psychoanalysis, Coleborne suggests, is heavily implicated in the modern project of governing the soul. As historians uncover and critique this project, psychoanalytic theory should be used cautiously.

Damoussi's analysis of how in interwar Australia, when the rational was privileged, it was to the irrational that analytic enthusiasts turned to find the truth of the self, points to a deeper paradox in the relationship between psychoanalysis and modernity. Freud and the early psychoanalysts imagined themselves as the brave prophets of a new, post-traditional world. The myths and illusions of the traditional world were to be relinquished for the scientific findings of psychoanalysis. But by situating the decentred individual at the heart of this modern body of knowledge, psychoanalysis undercut its own certainties. Nothing and nobody was ever fully knowable, for the unconscious would always return to subvert the most ordered of plans and lives. Even analysts were not immune from the caprice of the unconscious, as a growing appreciation of transference and counter-transference in the analytic space revealed. Damoussi touches on this in her case study of B. S. Jones's diary of his analysis. Whilst he recorded his dreams in the hope that they would provide a key to his unconscious, Damoussi suggests Jones had an audience in mind—his analyst. Thus 'the diarist's sense of self is shaped in an interactive way with his analyst'. Damoussi's observation takes us some distance from classical psychoanalysis's modernist imagining of the analyst as a blank screen, the neutral purveyor of scientific insights, towards a more postmodern understanding of psychoanalysis, in which the self is always formed in the contingent space of intersubjectivity.

Some antecedents of postmodernity in Freudian psychoanalysis are also found by valentine. She argues that interdisciplinarity, a concept central to postmodernism, 'is present at the making of psychoanalysis and modernism'. Although no unabashed proponent of psychoanalytic theory—indeed she muses that it may be nearing the limits of its usefulness to critical theory—valentine does note a flaw in contemporary interdisciplinary criticism of psychoanalysis. Such criticism frequently berates psychoanalysis for its claim to universalism and its refusal of situated knowledge; but, as valentine demonstrates, the imperialist reach of psychoanalysis may well be the product of its own interdisciplinary formation. This secret history of interdisciplinarity might give its contemporary enthusiasts some pause, or at least help persuade them that the endeavour of historical inquiry is not yet moribund.

Nolan and Reynolds continue valentine's task of pushing psychoanalysis beyond its modern moorings and into a reflexive critique of its own knowledge and processes. Both deploy psychoanalytic tools even as they critique psychoanalysis's twentieth-century claims to truth. Nolan uses psychoanalysis against itself to reveal the mechanisms of displacement and substitution in Freud's anthropological formulation of the Oedipus complex. Similarly, Reynolds draws on Kleinian theory to illuminate the part-object function homosexuality has played in psychoanalytic theory and

practice. This deployment of psychoanalysis against itself is a delicate balancing act, for it is critical and admiring in the same stroke. Ironic, too, in that psychoanalysis has long privileged the toleration of ambivalence.

Questions of identity, the self and the role of the unconscious, in the context of history and psychoanalysis, intersect most explicitly in the genre of biography. This genre, which includes aspects of both the individual and the collective, is the subject of Part II. Judith Brett opens this theme with an overview of the ways in which psychoanalytic ideas—especially those of Kohut, Freud and Klein—can be utilised in writing political biography. Using her own study of Robert Menzies as an example, Brett shows how Heinz Kohut's psychology of the self, with its emphasis upon ambitions and ideals, can be utilised to speculate on the inner world and public motivations of political figures. From Klein, Brett borrows the key concepts of projection and introjection as a means of understanding 'the traffic between the inner and the outer world'.

More generally, Brett challenges a number of myths in relation to the genre of psychoanalytic biography and attempts to debunk these in her discussion. These include a focus exclusively on sexuality and the belief that analysing individuals involves examining the workings of 'ahistorical drives'. On the contrary, the advantage of psychoanalysis, Brett argues, is that it 'provides the biographer with a grammar of the emotions to guide [the] interpretative task' of analysing their subjects' emotions. To do otherwise is to rely only on 'common sense, religion and literature' and therefore to ignore 'patterns not otherwise discernible'. The relationship between the public and the private is central to this discussion. Brett highlights the point—common to the pieces in this section—that psychobiography is founded on the history of private life and the psychoanalytic ways in which this impinges on the public persona.

John Rickard takes up this challenge of the public, the private and the historical in his examination of the dynamics of the Victorian family. Rickard attempts such reading in this consideration of Alfred Deakin and Henry Higgins and the ways in which family relationships play out their particular emotional lives. In doing so, Rickard challenges our understanding of the Victorian middle-class family, often regarded as 'hidebound and morally censorious'. As he shows, the families of neither Higgins nor Deakin fit this model, for 'within the bounds of the topics which could be addressed (particularly by women) emotion could be given full reign; indeed the culture often encouraged the fervent expression of such emotion'. In this middle-class Victorian context, Rickard observes that it was often language which was the 'bearer of emotion'.

By writing himself into his histories of Deakin and Higgins, Rickard allows us further insight into the way inner and outer worlds intersect, both

for the historian's subjects and the historian himself. Rickard relates how his twice-weekly therapy in Los Angeles with Victor, who was 'pretty much a conventional Freudian' analyst, and the concomitant reflection on his own childhood moulded his reading of Deakin and Higgins's familial lives. As Rickard's chapter unfolds, this influence of Freudian psychoanalysis becomes clear. Almost with an analyst's ear, Rickard is drawn to the free-associative elements of Deakin's and Higgins's writing, in which he finds examples of repetition, displacement, metaphor, distortion, neurotic conflict, sibling rivalry, guilt and reparation. This is the grand and tragic material of Freudian analysis, with its emphasis on drives and defences. And while there are legitimate critiques that such a metapsychology can slide towards the ahistorical, Rickard makes a compelling historical case for the use of Freudian theory in the study of Victorian families.

The influence of the familial on public lives and the historian's use of language to discern this dynamic are also central to Bain Attwood's biographical study of anthropologist Donald Thomson. Attwood argues that Thomson's 'emotionally powerful identification' with the plight of Indigenous Australians originated from the earlier traumas of his childhood and reflected his own 'worse childhood fears of abandonment or exile'. Through a careful examination of Thomson's language and the conflation of his identity with that of Indigenous Australians, Attwood explores the psychology and politics of empathy. The key psychological concepts Attwood deploys in tracing Thomson's passionate commitment to the cause of Aboriginal rights are idealisation, projection and identification. It is important to note that in explaining Thomson's political ideals through these terms and via his childhood, Attwood in no way diminishes the significance and courage of Thomson's activism, or the importance of history.

Both Rickard and Attwood situate their case studies firmly within a historical context and connect the psychology of their protagonists to that context. In the case of the former it is the middle-class Victorian family; in the latter, the dynamics of colonialism and race relations. The personal histories which inform their discussions provide another layer of interconnectedness between the psychoanalytic dimensions of the relationship between public and private life.

In concluding this section on biography, Christopher Forth takes us from a concern with the self to a more recent intellectual fascination with the body. The leading voice in a 'history of bodies' has been Michel Foucault, and while Forth happily acknowledges the value in mapping the discourses that constitute the modern body, he ponders the limits of social constructionist thought. Forth asks: is the idea of interiority simply a colonisation of the inside by the exterior? He suspects not, positing instead a dynamic relationship between inner and outer as lived and experienced through the

body. Psychoanalysis has had much to say about how the body experiences the inner and outer as one, not least through introjection and projection. Reading the nineteenth-century journals of French philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel, Forth thus turns to Freudian and post-Freudian thought to elaborate on how ‘physical integrity could be so emotionally invested as to become virtually synonymous with selfhood’. In considering such issues, Forth contextualises the histories of hygiene, medicine and morality, and their relationship to ‘normative modes of masculine identity’. Finally, in bringing theories of the embodied unconscious and abjection to bear upon a history of bodies, Forth deploys psychoanalysis lightly, as ‘one interpretative tool among many’.

Moving from individual histories to the exploration of group experiences has always posed a challenge for psychoanalysis, as John Cash notes in the concluding chapter of this book. Biography can at least approximate, vicariously, the theories of the consulting room, whether through the analysis of texts or interviews. The best practitioners of this art—and here Judith Brett and the late Graham Little spring to mind—address ‘the contingent effects of social process (and specific, often traumatic, events), by analysing the ways in which such processes and events mark themselves upon the subject’. Matters become more complicated the further one moves away from the study of an individual or a specific grouping with a common and shared identity. At this point, suggests Cash, there must be some attempt to more systematically theorise social processes. Nowhere is this more pertinent than in the analysis of nationalism and national identities, the subject of Part III.

Miriam Dixson opens this section by focusing on the example of Anglo-Australian identity. She charts the link between nationalism, identity and the social imaginary, which encompasses institutions, language and history. Drawing on the theories of Cornelius Castoriadis, Dixson explicates the way in which the ‘imaginary institution of society’ and those institutions that shape ‘imaginary significations’ such as language, laws, customs, techniques, arts, topography and climate can be applied to understanding the Australian imaginary. To this list she adds the ‘experience of convictism, the originary power of an authoritarian, centralised state, Anglo-Irish rancour, and race and sex relations’. It is within this discussion that Dixson argues that early Anglo qualities have been sustained over Australia’s history. These qualities, Dixson suggests, have been crucial to Australia’s particular experience of ‘the project of autonomy’, and remain so today, despite the vibrant overlay of non-Anglo cultures. Dixson’s position, detailed in her 1999 book, *The Imaginary Australian*, has not been without its critics, and in this chapter she responds by elaborating on her 30-year intellectual journey through psychoanalytic theory. Historians generally have not greatly taken

to psychoanalysis in Australia, and Dixson’s willingness to deploy diverse strands of psychoanalytic thought—from Erik Erikson through to Melanie Klein and, more recently, the philosopher-analyst Cornelius Castoriadis—has been impressively, and presciently, eclectic.

Kleinian thought and object relations theory more widely appear in Marjorie O’Loughlin’s analysis of the ties that bind individuals to a sense of nationhood. In studying the sources of national attachment, O’Loughlin argues that the significance of place has been overlooked. While not denying the importance of an ethnic or civic core in debates about national attachment, O’Loughlin draws on Klein, Winnicott, and Kohut’s self psychology, as well as a European philosophical tradition, to suggest that a sense of national belonging is ‘interwoven with attachment, with a sense of being in-place’. O’Loughlin uses Klein to demonstrate how fantasy infuses national imaginings, in ways that are both potentially creative and destructive, and Winnicott and Kohut to further detail the social, shared nature of fantasy. The broader cultural significance of these theories, she argues, is that they can be used to study ‘such phenomena as attachment to the nation, national feeling and identity’. She does this here with a phenomenological appreciation of place, or more specifically, the ways in which embodied individuals experience history ‘in place’. Both approaches (the psychoanalytic and the phenomenological) may be particularly useful in studying contemporary discourses of national attachment in Australia. The 2001 Federal election, for example, saw the skilful political manipulation of fantasies of national belonging and security in ways that were chillingly successful. Psychoanalysis and an appreciation of place and history can help decode these political messages, although the task of rebutting their power and appeal may well be more onerous.

Nicola Nixon returns to the theme of particular enduring national discourses in her paper on the imaginary in the Balkan region. Nixon expands on this topic in the context of the war in the Balkans, where she frames the repetition of the discourse of ancient Balkan animosities in terms of social fantasy. Nixon links fantasy—‘operating in unconscious, habitual social practices rather than cognitive thought’—to the social linkage of imagined communities. In ideological terms, fantasy structures ‘unconscious desire’ and impacts on social processes beyond their immediate expression in discourse. Through this prism, Nixon explores the fantasy of Balkan tribalism—termed the ‘ancient hatreds thesis’—which, she argues, structured the very mechanisms of the international peace process, and constructed and legitimated the violent destruction in Yugoslavia. Her chapter, which charts the relationship between the imaginary, the material and the discursive in one corner of world politics, gives weight to Dennis Altman’s call for a psychoanalytic materialist study of international relations.²¹ In all three

chapters in this section, the various forms of nationalism and their psychoanalytic expression are firmly grounded within, and gain meaning from, the historical context which has shaped their very expression.

The theme of trauma and memory has in recent times been developed and articulated by scholars using psychoanalytic frameworks to reinterpret historical events. In memories of war, the place of traumatic subjectivity has become central to historical analysis.²² This theme is at the centre of the essays by Esther Faye and Christina Twomey. What Faye describes as the ‘therapeutic use of history’ informs her study of second-generation Holocaust survivors. Using a Lacanian framework, she examines the relationship between trauma, *jouissance* and history in two ways. First, she questions the recent efforts by some commentators for a recognition of a shared past between Jews and Germans. Second, through an examination of the writing of the Jewish-Australian writer Yvonne Fein, she asks whether children of Holocaust survivors can detach themselves from a ‘masochistic enjoyment of it’ and ‘stage’ history instead. In this paper, a Lacanian psychoanalytic understanding of history sheds light on the complex Jewish–German relationship; on the second generation of Holocaust survivors; and on the contested nature of Jewish identity itself. In another consideration of the traumas of war, Twomey takes the experiences of civilian internees during World War II as the subject of her inquiry. One of the key themes to emerge from this study is that trauma is not experienced in a homogenous way. Women especially drew on particular discourses over time to express the legacy of their traumas, reflecting the historical specificity of how people experience, relate and understand trauma. The relationship between trauma, psychoanalytic theory and historical narrative is drawn together in this discussion as the point is made, following Cathy Caruth, that the traumatised ‘carry an impossible history within them’.²³

The relationship between psychoanalysis and trauma has been the focus of many studies—especially those analysing war and the Holocaust. The origins of psychoanalysis, as Adam Phillips has observed, are immersed in war, for it was ‘partly made out of materials of war, its casualties and its language’.²⁴ Faye and Twomey draw on the uses for history of this relationship. In Twomey’s account, it is the ‘unexpressed history’ which is examined in the process of that traumatic history becoming absorbed into the present rather than *returning* as an ‘alternative reality’. Faye spotlights the ways in which the taming of the relationship between German and Jew promotes a certain type of history that moves beyond a ‘deadly fascination’ with the Holocaust. In each of these pieces, our understanding of the culture of the historical period—the nineteenth century, the interwar years and the present—is illuminated and extended by and examination of psychoanalysis either as a historical phenomena or as an explanatory tool.

Finally, the texts and archives which are used to explore these themes add a further richness to our understandings of how the various and complex intersections between psychoanalysis and history are produced. The case history is examined by Coleborne as a particular source where subjectivities are interpreted and defined. Patient casebooks are themselves ‘histories’, she argues. Diaries have long been identified as precious and illuminating texts which can expose the conscious and unconscious thoughts of those living and dead. Coleborne draws on a diary to enter into the emotional space of her protagonist. In her examination of another type of diary—one documenting dreams—Damousi examines the formation of masculinity through self-analysis.

Both valentine and Faye draw on a different kind of text—literature—to explore the ways in which these can also provide productive means of reading the workings of the self, ego and the unconscious. In particular valentine points to the narratives and various institutions which promoted ideas of psychoanalysis; these were no more revealing than in the work of literary doyens of the modern period, such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and H. D. Faye examines the crime detective novel, *April Fool*, to examine how such a text lends itself to a complex psychoanalytic reading like the one offered here. In drawing also on the confessional, Faye shares with Twomey an interest in this narrative form as a means of exploring trauma and psychoanalysis. The confessional mode, which in many respects is evident in all of the sources used in Part I, also points to the intersection between the private and the public and to the ways in which issues of the ‘private’ become political.

The relationship between literature and psychoanalysis has aroused far less resistance among literary critics than historians, as those working in the fields of literary studies and cultural studies have often championed the uses of psychoanalysis in exploring interiority and the unconscious through textual analysis.²⁵ Both share an interest in language, and ‘an investigation of character’, while the intersection of psychoanalysis and literature with history is often to be found in exploration of time and memory.²⁶ Rose Lucas takes us through the relationship between the literary form and psychoanalysis, where it is the ‘telling of stories’ that offers a ‘pathway to comprehension and redemption from the oppressive power of what is hidden or repressed’. Through an examination of Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* Lucas highlights the central role of narrative in both literature and psychoanalysis and how in both mediums it becomes almost impossible to know and define the elusive concept of subjectivity. Both in being an examination of the history of psychoanalysis itself, and in using such narrative frameworks to tease the reader, Atwood’s novel, as Lucas points out, ‘re-

affirms our desire to know and define the concept of subjectivity almost despite the impossibility of doing so’.

In the closing chapter of this volume, John Cash also touches on the frequent and significant role trauma plays in the constitution of the subject. The subject, he argues, extending psychoanalytic theory, is doubly decentred—first through the dynamic unconscious and then through the rules of the field of ideology. He contends that it is as a doubly decentred subject ‘that we find our place and take our place in the ongoing history of the present’. From here, Cash takes us on a tour of social theory’s attempt to grapple with this double decentring. Cash critiques the ways in which social theory has appropriated psychoanalysis as a theory of socialisation, thereby flattening out a conceptualisation of the subject. What is lost in this melancholic transfer is what Cash details as the very stuff of history: ‘the conflicted, contested, dynamic making and remaking of identity and social relations in the contingent here and now’. In his closing paragraphs, appropriately enough, Cash returns to Freud for inspiration in sketching out an approach to history and the unconscious that does not stumble at the social.

The aim of this collection is to highlight the eclectic and diverse application of aspects of psychoanalytic thought within concepts of history and the past which include issues relating to both the individual and the collective. In utilising a broad range of approaches, concepts, categories and frameworks, these essays point to the rich and varied terrain of what is termed the ‘psychoanalytic’ and to how these can be connected to, and shaped by, historical considerations. American historian and psychoanalytic theorist Fred Weinstein has recently noted that the history of psychoanalysis—and its likely future—is one of fragmentation. In this volume alone, our contributors have drawn upon the work of Freud, Klein, Kohut, Winnicott, Erickson, Jacques Lacan, Castoriadis and Slavoj Žižek in their psychoanalytic readings of history. Each of these psychoanalytic theorists differs in their conceptualisation of the subject in history, and their use, accordingly, produces different histories of the present.

As Reynolds notes in his chapter, psychoanalysis in the twenty-first century is a very broad church, and its congregation fractious. A historian using classical Freudian theory might choose to study the operation of drives and defences in any one historical moment. A Kleinian might look at the splitting, projection and projective identification of innate aggressive fantasies, and the acts of reparation that could follow from such phantasmic processes. Conversely, a Winnicottian might pay greater attention to environmental factors and to how inner and outer worlds meet in transitional objects and phenomena. The follower of Kohut could privilege a history of the self, and the various transference experiences—mirroring, idealisation

and twinship—that constitute this self. Using the ego psychological-inspired work of Eric Erikson, a historian might discern the building blocks and stages of identity, not simply in the life of an individual, but also the collective and the nation. From the writing of Lacan, Žižek and Castoriadis, the historian can bring complex theories of the imaginary to bear upon a history of social formations.

All of these approaches are deployed, in varying and eclectic degrees, in the essays that follow. In writing histories that pay due attention to the canny and the uncanny, this eclecticism is welcome. Such a diverse application of psychoanalytic theory is also perfectly within the tradition of psychoanalysis; for, as Weinstein observes, ‘far from being the authoritatively controlled and easily managed discipline that critics have often claimed it to be, psychoanalysis is and always has been anarchic in its tendencies, resembling too much its clinical subject, the idiosyncratic subject’. In this volume psychoanalytic connections are further mediated by class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, themselves historical categories which have often been discussed outside of understandings of the rational, the logical and common sense. By drawing attention to the emotional aspects of the relationships and identities which are shaped along these axes, this volume coheres around the notion that emotional life has a history that is contested in the cracks and fault lines between the past and the present. In the writing of these idiosyncratic histories, psychoanalysis remains a valuably uncanny companion.