

# Sociology and Psychoanalysis: The Unfulfilled Promise

A conference organised by the Institute of Psychoanalysis, the British Sociological Association's study group for Sociology, Psychoanalysis and the Psychosocial, and UCL, Institute of Education.

**11th-12th November 2016**

**Keynote Speaker:** Professor Jessica Benjamin, New York University.

**Location:** Institute of Education, University College London  
(20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL)

**Registration Opens: 23rd May**

**Register at [www.psychanalysis.org.uk](http://www.psychanalysis.org.uk)**

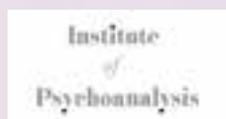
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Conference organisers: Peter Redman (Open University), Michael Rustin (University of East London), Julie Walsh (Warwick University)

PRICES			
BSA/IoP member full conference	£85.00	BSA/IoP member low wage	£45.00
Non-member full conf	£95.00	Non-member low wage	£50.00

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## Abstract



Despite the simplicity of Freud's provocation that sociology 'cannot be anything but applied psychology', the relation between the two disciplines remains an open question for many. Of course, there have been multiple points of contact between sociology and psychoanalysis - from, among others, Freud's own writings on civilisation, religion, and the psychology of groups; through the projects of the Freudo-Marxists and the Frankfurt School; to Lacanian accounts of subjectivity, feminist and queer re-evaluations of sexual difference, and postcolonial critique.

Nevertheless, it is true to say that psychoanalysis has often found itself on the margins of sociological discourse, just as sociology has often found itself on the margins of psychoanalytic thought. To quote the title of a recent collection, psychoanalysis and sociology have suffered an 'unhappy divorce'; the promise of their relationship remains unfulfilled.

Over the course of this conference we will explore the presence of psychoanalysis within the history of sociology, reflect on earlier attempts to bring about the much delayed rapprochement between the disciplines, investigate the continued 'application' of psychoanalysis within the field of sociological enquiry, and consider what the two disciplines might learn from each other today. How does psychoanalysis, attending to the unconscious fantasy life of the individual, move beyond the realm of private interests? Conversely, how does sociology reflect on the operation of the unconscious? What forms of psychoanalysis are sustainable in different socio-political climates? And how can a psychoanalytic sociology enhance our understanding of contemporary society.

Bringing together international scholars and practitioners of sociology and psychoanalysis, our goal will be to explore the terms of a future psychoanalytic sociology and a sociologically informed psychoanalysis.

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