



Emergence

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Emergence

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Emergence Volume III: Preface

Welcome to Volume III of *Emergence*, the University of Southampton's Faculty of Humanities postgraduate research journal. The primary function of the journal is to showcase a selection of papers which were given at this year's Humanities Postgraduate Connection (HPGC) Annual Conference, titled 'Memory and Myth: A Tradition in the Reception and Creation of Reality'. This year we are also delighted to be able to expand on this remit by including a paper from Matt Leggatt, who has been kind enough to create an additional work which was inspired by the conference.



The theme of the 4th Annual HPGC Conference provided the presenters with an opportunity to examine how the concepts of myth and memory intersected with their own research. This premise has produced a diverse collection of articles, each of which deals with a unique facet of this expansive topic. Having had the pleasure of overseeing the editing of these papers, I can say for certain that the excellence of the conference is reflected in this edition of *Emergence*.

The first five articles examine the methods used to construct memories (both living and recorded), and the manner in which this process is influenced by social, political and historical factors. Matt Leggatt's '9/11 and the Cost of Remembering' provides an analysis of the symbolic significance of 'Reflecting Absence', a memorial (currently under construction) for the victims of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centre. By examining the planned memorial in the wider context of US popular culture, he investigates the manner

in which the memory of the 9/11 attacks have been manipulated in order to serve subsequent government agendas. Elena Caoduro's article 'Fluid Memories: Cultural Rememberings of the 2005 London Bombings' also explores the construction of memories in the wake of a terrorist attack. However, Elena focuses on the strategies which have been employed by both individuals and wider society to ameliorate the trauma caused by the 7/7 bombings. A key aspect of her article is a discussion of the manner in which media produced 'memory objects' (such as photos, video and audio) were redeployed following the attack. Images which were once used to relay the horror of the event were repurposed to demonstrate the healing of physical and emotional scars. While both articles assess the cultural consequences of terrorist brutality, their contrasting conclusions are a reminder that remembrance and healing do not always go hand in hand.

'Creating a Tradition of Collective Amnesia' by Sarah Shawyer continues this theme of memory construction, but instead of focusing on its consequences, she examines the manner in which living memory is translated into history. Her article investigates the treatment of the armed struggle between Jewish military organisations and the British in Mandatory Palestine by the *Jewish Chronicle*. She uses the coverage of this conflict over the subsequent sixty years to reveal a complex set of cultural and political narratives which govern what is remembered and what is not.

The final two articles which fit into the broader category of memory construction are linked by their shared intent of challenging accepted histories. 'Duality: History and Memory in the Narrative of Norwood' by Lawrence Cohen explores the tension between document-derived history and accounts based on distant memories. His research on the history of the Jewish Orphanage at Norwood explores the implications which the personal recollections of the (now adult) children have for official histories of the institution. Peter Girdwood's article 'On the Edge of History' demonstrates a similar mistrust of official history by questioning the validity of Greek and Roman descriptions of the Etruscans and Celts. He argues that such depictions are evidence of the self-mythologizing Roman tradition which portrays other civilisations through politically and culturally contingent stereotypes. These accounts have continued to influence the manner in which

we view these civilisations, making it all the more necessary to understand the attitudes which informed the works of Roman and Greek authors. Both Lawrence and Peter go beyond recognised histories in order to expose the underlying factors which shaped them.

The final three contributors explore the uses of mythology, each utilising a different definition of the term in order to gain insight into their chosen topic. Marilyn Mallia's article 'The Myth of Baucis and Philemon: a New Reading of George Sand's *Indiana* (1832)' argues that Sand's novel incorporates elements of Greek myth, an understanding of which is vital for a proper analysis of the text. She examines how Sand uses the story of Baucis and Philemon (taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) to challenge the inequality of the institution of marriage, and also to provide alternatives to patriarchal models of relationships. In a similar vein, 'The Myths of the Crystal Palace' by Esther Fernandez-Llorente looks at the manner in which the 1851 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations' co-opted classical mythology to signify the superiority of Victorian British civilisation. However, Esther also draws upon Roland Barthes' work on the functions of myth in modern society to examine the methods by which this process took place. She argues that a key aspect of this was the manner in which objects and artefacts were detached from their original contexts, thereby removing their existing connotations and becoming a surface upon which new meanings could be inscribed. Both articles demonstrate the contrasting purposes to which mythology can be put, be it through literary allusion or symbolic redefinition.

Mike Witcombe's approach in 'Home Run or Strike Out? Reimagining Baseball in Philip Roth's *Great American Novel* and Michael Chabon's

Summerland marks a departure from those used in the previous two articles. Instead of examining how mythology is deployed to further a pre-existing agenda, he argues that both novels use baseball as a device to explore the myths and narratives that pervade American culture. The game is shown to be a means of transmitting beliefs and values between generations, and as a way of expressing otherwise unarticulated attitudes to familiar institutions such as home, childhood and parenthood.

The impressive breadth of scope and vision displayed by all of these articles is astounding, as is the variety of research interests which are accommodated by a single faculty in a single institution. However, collecting them together in a single journal is a reminder of their shared objective of applying critical thought to texts, events and discourses in order to reveal meanings, beliefs and attitudes which would have otherwise remained unappreciated. I hope that the reader will find this edition of *Emergence* not only an introduction to the excellent research carried out at the University of Southampton, but also a demonstration of the potential of interdisciplinary co-operation.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the writing and production of *Emergence*. This volume represents the combined efforts of eight contributors and a significant section of the HPGC, all of whom have given up their time in order to bring this edition into being. I would also like to thank Dan Varndell and Chris Penfold (previous editors of *Emergence*), both for establishing and developing the journal in the past, and also for their advice and encouragement in the present.

James Osborne
Coordinating Editor, *Emergence* 2011

Emergence is also published online, please visit www.soton.ac.uk/hpgr/news_and_events/pg_forum.html for more information.

Humanities Postgraduate Connection

Open to all Humanities postgraduates, the HPGC is an organisation run by students, for students. Our members strive to create opportunities to socialise with colleagues, assist with career development, engage in academic debate and encourage networking. In order to achieve these aims, the HPGC has a lively social and cultural events calendar, holds thought-provoking seminars led by current students, organises a dynamic annual conference, and publishes this academic journal, *Emergence*.

Events held over the past year have included a Welcome Social, an American Thanksgiving, Chinese New Year celebrations, and frequent countryside walks. Topics of our recent seminars have included tips and suggestions on how to survive postgraduate life and organise a conference, current research issues, such as how the world is evolving around us with regards to multiculturalism, and practical tutorials on funding and organising research trips.

Our most recent annual conference, titled 'Memory and Myth: A Tradition in the Reception and Creation of Reality', was held on the 1st of April 2011. It showcased a wide range of stimulating research and vigorous discussion on the ways in which the two concepts are utilised, manipulated and addressed in today's society. Acknowledging that our perceptions and beliefs are subject to experience and environment, we strove to explore how memory and myth both represent and create the past and present. Our panels addressed the

production of social memories, appropriations of mythology, transmutations of the past and the rethinking of cultural nostalgia.

Our journal, *Emergence*, has expanded from a proceedings of the annual conference to include other work in the Humanities that explore similar themes. While many of the papers presented at this year's conference have been incorporated into the current edition, other students were invited to contribute, providing them with the opportunity to engage with the HPGC and develop their skills as academic researchers.

The HPGC continues to flourish thanks to the diverse interests, skills and personalities of the postgraduates who participate in the seminars, events, conference, and journal. We invite you to join us in the coming academic year and enjoy all that the HPGC has to offer. If you would like to partake in any activities, or become a member of the committee and contribute your own ideas, look out for our emails, or visit our webpage, Facebook page, or follow us on Twitter (details of which can be found below). We look forward to meeting you in the coming year!

Those of us in the HPGC would like to thank one person in particular for helping to create and maintain our organisation. The tireless efforts and sound advice of Dr. Eleanor Quince, Postgraduate Employability and Skills Tutor, has enabled the HPGC to become the thriving community it is today.

Katie Merriken
Chair of HPGC Committee

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