

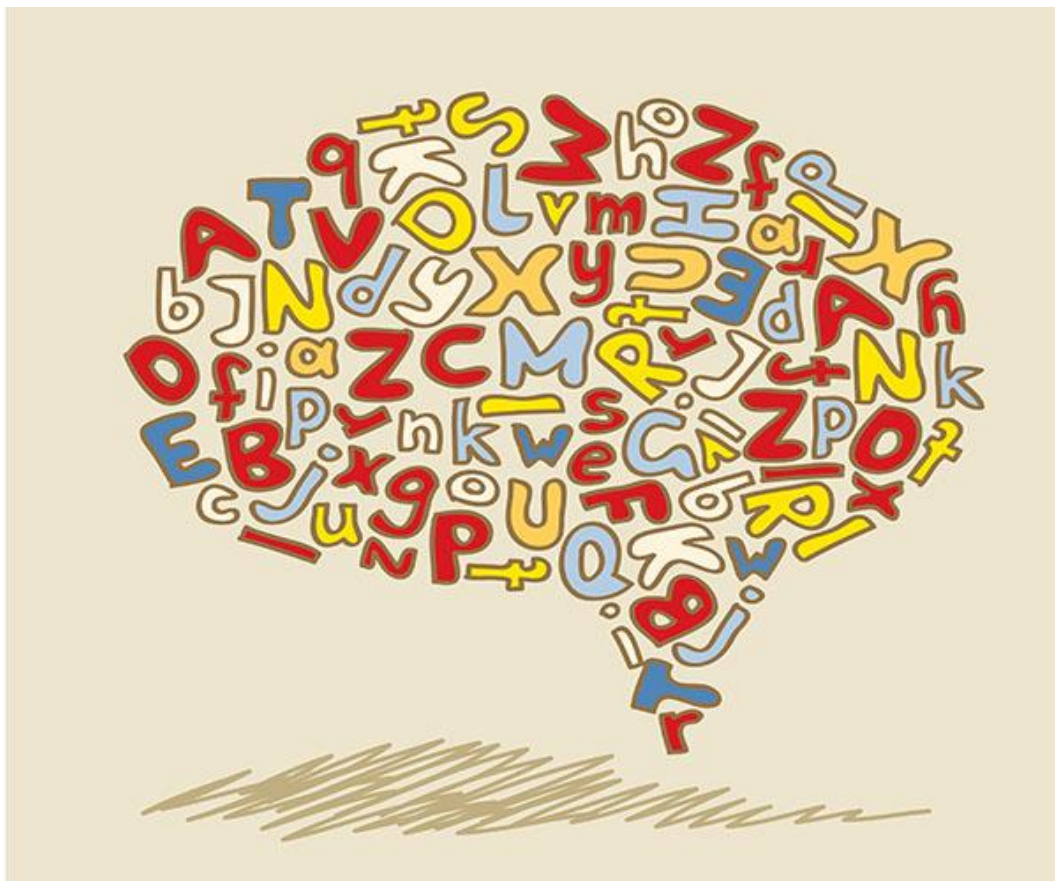
The Human Mind Project
**Language, Literacy,
Literature & the Mind**



9 March 2016

Senate House, London

A story of the mind is a story of what makes us human, one informed by the best science of the day and by a humanistic understanding of the contingencies of life and history. What is the role of storytelling in this endeavour? Is there a connection between the emergence of both spoken and written language, and the development of the mind? What sort of cultural instrument is literature? And what cognitive faculties does the use of literature employ, and empower? The purpose of this workshop is to explore the place of language, literacy and narrative in human culture, and the role of story-telling about oneself and others.



Event Program

Wifi Access: University of London Wifi can be accessed from all locations in Senate House. Please select network **UOL Conferences** and enter the password **thesev**

09:30 *Registration and Coffee in Senate House, Room 349*

10:00 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Colin Blakemore, Professor of Neuroscience and Philosophy; and Project Leader of *The Human Mind Project*, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Chair: Mattia Gallotti

Research Fellow in Philosophy; and Manager of *The Human Mind Project*, School of Advanced Study, University of London

10:30 BEYOND SYMPTOMATIC READING

Sarah Churchwell

Chair of Public Understanding of the Humanities, School of Advanced Study, University of London

THE EVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES

Thomas Scott-Philips

Senior Research Fellow in Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology, Durham University

11:30 Discussion

12:00 *Lunch Break*

Chair: Barry Smith

Director of the Institute of Philosophy, School of Advanced Study, University of London

13:30 THE VOICES IN OUR HEADS

Charles Fernyhough

Professor of Psychology, Durham University

ENDORPHINS, COGNITION, AND THE LITERARY RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

Sophie Duncan, Evert van Emde Boas, Laurie Maguire and Jacqueline Thompson
Calleva Centre, Magdalen College, University of Oxford

14:30 Discussion

15:00 *Coffee break*

Chair: Colin Blakemore

Professor of Neuroscience and Philosophy; and Project Leader, *The Human Mind Project*, School of
Advanced Study, University of London

15:30 WHAT AND HOW DO WE LEARN FROM FICTIONAL STORIES?

Greg Currie

Professor of Philosophy, University of York

SPEECH ON THE BRAIN – THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Sophie Scott

Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London

16:30 Discussion

17.15 *Drinks Reception in Senate House, Room 243*

18.30 *End of Day*

Abstracts

BEYOND SYMPTOMATIC READING

Sarah Churchwell, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Abstract to follow

THE EVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES

Thomas Scott-Philips, Durham University

Linguistic communication is arguably humanity's most distinctive characteristic. Why are we the only species that communicates in this way? In this talk, I will present reasons to believe that the foundational difference between humans and other species is not strictly language, but rather about the type of communication used. Unlike other systems, human communication depends upon advanced forms of social psychology, and the difference between this and the communication of other species is a difference of kind, not of degree. Languages are, in turn, conventions that enhance the expressive potential of this distinctly human means of communicating. The result is a system that is extremely flexible, and rich in possibility. Human culture could not exist without it.

THE VOICES IN OUR HEADS

Charles Fernyhough, Durham University

What role do words play in our conscious experience? Many people report that their thoughts are highly verbal. In this talk I will focus on some key recent findings on the phenomenon of inner speech (as psychologists refer to it) and the more atypical experience of hearing voices (or auditory verbal hallucinations). I will describe some research from our interdisciplinary Hearing the Voice project at Durham University, focusing on the value of viewing some types of voice-hearing as forms of inner dialogue, and the role of such experiences in literary creativity.

ENDORPHINS, COGNITION, AND THE LITERARY RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

Sophie Duncan, Evert van Emde Boas, Laurie Maguire, and Jacqueline Thompson, University of Oxford

"Why does tragedy give pleasure?" is a question that has occupied critics from Aristotle to Eagleton. As a concept, the interaction of pain and pleasure is simultaneously aesthetic, emotional, and somatic. We explore spectators' responses to tragedy by looking at the role played by endorphins. Our paper chronicles the results of a practical experiment in which audiences watched the 90-minute film *Stuart: A Life Backwards*.

WHAT AND HOW DO WE LEARN FROM FICTIONAL STORIES?

Greg Currie, University of York

Language provides a notoriously unreliable system of signalling. There are many reasons, and many opportunities to use it to mislead your audience. At some stage the deliberate transmission of false information gave rise to a more benign project--fiction, where the falsity of what is said is common knowledge between sender and receiver. But audiences of fiction don't turn off their knowledge gathering systems when they encounter fiction; there is plenty of evidence that it affects belief and other systems capable of learning, and is often sought for that very reason. How do people learn from fictional stories? Should we think that fictions, or some of them, are more likely to be sources of ignorance and error than of knowledge? I will not be able to answer these questions with any completeness but I hope to make a start.

SPEECH ON THE BRAIN – THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Sophie Scott, University College London

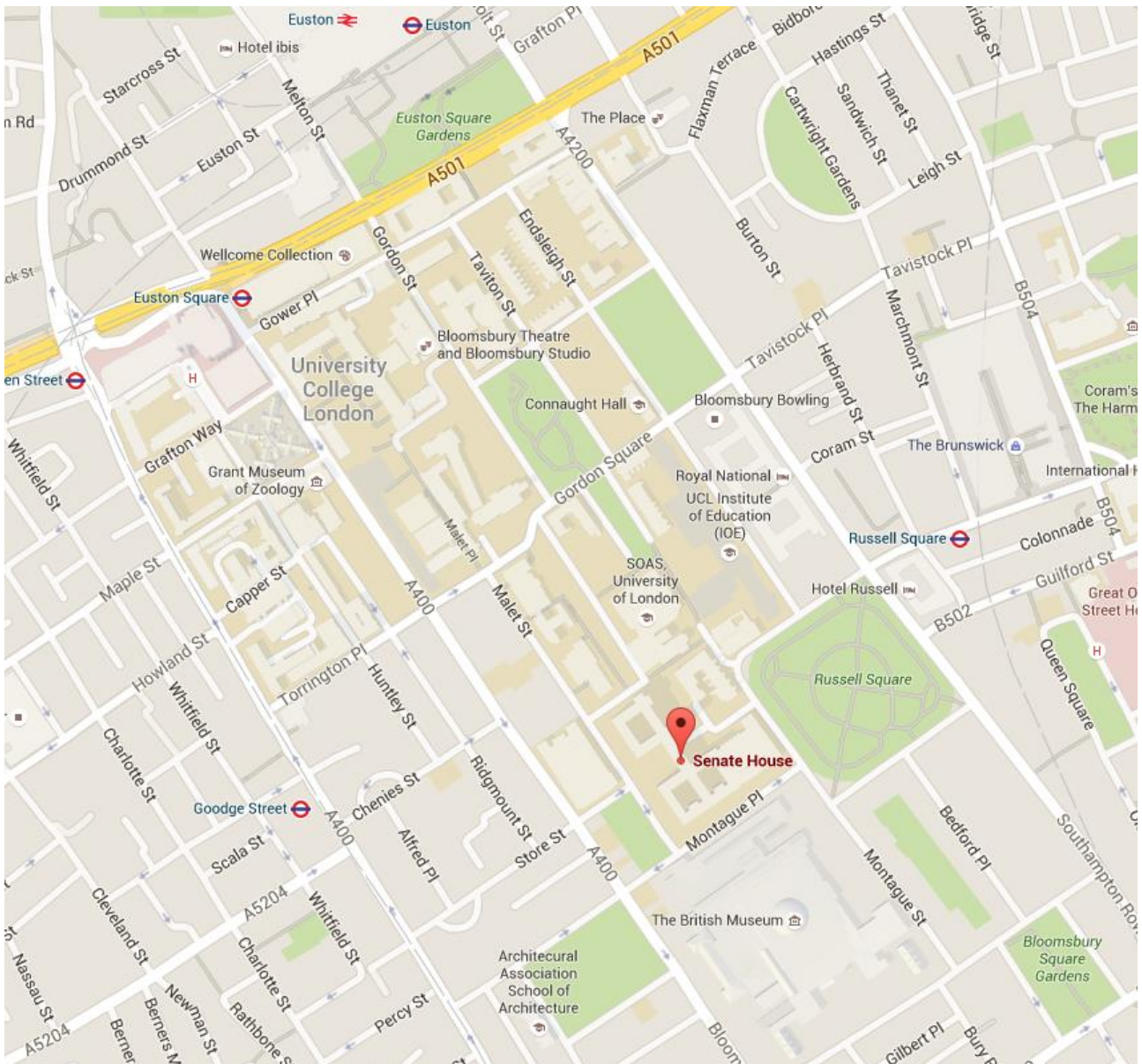
Abstract to follow

Arrival and Information

“Language, Literacy, Literature and the Mind” is taking place in Room 349, Senate House. Upon arrival at Senate House please enquire at reception for directions to the room. The drinks reception will take place in Room 243 from 5:15 pm.

Our full address please is listed below. Nearest tube stations are Russell Square and Goodge Street.

Senate House
Malet Street
London, WC1E 7HU



Where to Eat

There are many sandwich bars, cafes and restaurants in the immediate vicinity of UCL and Senate House. Below is a list of a few suggestions of places to enjoy lunch, all within a few minutes' walk.

COFFEE:

Senate House South: coffee and sandwich bar under the grand staircase

Store Street Espresso: 40 Store Street

The Life Goddess: 29 Store Street

Café Nero: 79 & 187 Tottenham Court Road, and in Paperchase, 213 Tottenham Court Road

EAT: 94 Tottenham Court Road

Prêt-a-Manger: Tottenham Court Road/Bayley Street and near Goodge Street, also 40 Bernard Street (opposite Russell Square station)

Sharp's: 9 Windmill Street (coffee with or without a haircut)

NEARBY:

Store Street:

Café Deco: Italian café

Olivelli: licensed Italian restaurant with a good choice of pizza and pasta

The Life Goddess: Greek deli serving sandwiches and light lunches

Caffé Paradiso: Italian café

Busaba Eathai: recommended modern Thai restaurant (gets busy)

Byron: hamburgers

Co-op mini supermarket

Tottenham Court Road / Tottenham Street:

Many kinds of eatery, including three Prêt-a-Manger, EAT, two Café Nero.

Meals at Heals, 196 Tottenham Court Rd + Peyton & Byrne sandwich bar on the ground floor

Pain Quotidien: corner of Goodge Street for daily bread, salads, soups, etc

Itsu: sushi, soups and noodles to eat in or take away

Gails and Gails Kitchen: Bayley Street/ Tottenham Court Road

Pod, Tottenham Street: hot food and wraps

Yumchaa, Tottenham Street: tea specialist, serves sandwiches and cakes too

Gigs, Tottenham Street: fish and chips

Supermarkets: Waitrose

Goodge Street:

Many sandwich shops and other kinds of eatery including EAT, Prêt-a-Manger and Nandos.

Papaya: Noodles, rice and spicy Asian savouries

Italiano Coffee Co.: very thin, very cheap pizzas

Benito's Hat Mexican Kitchen: 56 Goodge Street: burritos etc.

Salento Green Life: Italian

Barrica: 62 Goodge St: tapas (and many different kinds of sherry)

Yaki.co.jp Japanese Bakery: savouries, dumplings, omelettes, rice

Newman Street Tavern: rather grand and open for breakfast, lunch, dinner

Goodge Place: Thai/Indian/Caribbean/Mediterranean street food stalls Monday to Friday

Charlotte Street area (off Goodge Street)

Charlotte Street is almost entirely filled with restaurants and cafes: *Côte Brasserie*, *Pizza Express*, *Siam Central* (Thai), *Wahaca* (Mex), *Nizuni* (Japanese), *Obika* (Italian with lunch deli counter), *Barnyard* (British farm style with an American twist), *The Draft House* (burgers and hot dogs), *Vagabond* (wine, charcuterie and cheeses) Also nearby:

Sagar: 17a Percy Street: South Indian vegetarian

Boopshi's: 31 Windmill Street: schnitzel and spritz

Lantana, *Hecho En Mexico*, *Salmeria Dino*: Charlotte Place off Goodge Street

Marquis of Granby and *The Fitzroy Tavern*: pub food

Torrington Place (off Tottenham Court Road):

Marlborough Arms: pub food

Patisserie Valerie, 24 Torrington Place: sandwiches, bagels, pastries and, of course, cakes

Planet Organic, 22 Torrington Place: organic light meals/soup/snacks/fruit/sandwiches (gets busy)

Russell Square/Bernard Street:

Open-air café in the park in Russell Square

Prêt-a-Manger, 40 Bernard Street

Bar Centrale, Bernard Street: bacon rolls as they should be

Brunswick Centre:

Foodstall market on a Saturday

Tortoise and Hare Noodle Bar: East Asian

Carluccio's: Italian

Giraffe: global bit of everything

Yo Sushi!: conveyor-belt sushi

The British Museum: entrance Montague Place: coffee/sandwich/bars in the Great Court

The Cake Shop in the London Review Book Shop, 14 Bury Place: sandwiches, quiches, soup, cakes and coffee