First Joint meeting

HUManities and the Medical Sciences

27th January 2012
Introduction
Clare Vassallo & Victor Grech
Joint co-chairpersons

Scholars of the humanities, social sciences and arts have always been interested in matters pertaining to health and illness, given that both are an integral part of the human experience. On the other hand, medical practitioners not only look upon their competences and attitudes as both science and art, but despite clinical detachment, many are often introspective about the human and wider dimensions of their practice.

Medical humanities as an academic pursuit is a relative newcomer to universities. It involves collaboration between scholars with diverse backgrounds and examines the many intersections between medicine, the human condition and the humanistic disciplines.

HUMS at the University of Malta is a novel forum for scholars interested in medical humanities and aims to draw upon the intellectual strengths of several disciplines. It is intended as a series of veritable bridges between different intellectual endeavours. The Programme proposes to explore and encourage interfaces between the humanities and medical science and aims to facilitate and disseminate cross-disciplinary research. It also aims to offer opportunities for postgraduate study and research. HUMS aims for inclusion, and for collaboration with local and overseas centres, programmes and individuals with common interests.

The HUMS meeting planned for 27th January 2012, and hosted by the Faculty of Arts, has a dual role. It serves to formally launch the Programme and to make available further information on the initiative, as well as to provide a forum for scholars from a variety of disciplines to communicate and discuss areas of their academic interest informally with an eclectic audience.
## Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Introduction – Deans and Rector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45</td>
<td>Defining Woman in Medical Discourse and Science Fiction</td>
<td>Clare Vassallo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:05</td>
<td>The Pinocchio Syndrome and the Prosthetic Impulse</td>
<td>Victor Grech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:25</td>
<td>On Flesh and Prosthesis</td>
<td>Victoria Sultana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:45</td>
<td>The Medical effects of space travel - myths and facts</td>
<td>Gordon Caruana Dingli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05</td>
<td>The Discourse of Doctor - Patient Encounters - A Sociolinguistic Perspective</td>
<td>Lydia Scriha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25</td>
<td>The accoucher looks at the Torah</td>
<td>Charles Savona-Ventura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:05</td>
<td>Persons with M.E. in Malta. Between critical realism and social constructivism</td>
<td>M Brown &amp; M Briguglio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:25</td>
<td>Epilepsy: the falling sickness in literature and in the movies</td>
<td>Janet Mifsud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>The face: an overlap of science and art</td>
<td>Joseph Cacciottolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:05</td>
<td>Art and arthritis</td>
<td>Carmel Mallia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:25</td>
<td>Translating Medical Terms into Maltese: Practice or Theory?</td>
<td>Charles Briffa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Languages and evolution: the family tree and historical stratification.</td>
<td>Joseph Brincat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:05</td>
<td>Lunch (will be provided courtesy of the Faculty of Arts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:50</td>
<td>Childhood Obesity in Malta: a sociological perspective</td>
<td>Gillian Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:10</td>
<td>Hospitaliers: Healing the Body, Healing the Soul, c.1580-c.1700</td>
<td>Emanuel Buttigieg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>Processes in Clinical Reasoning</td>
<td>Arthur Felice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:50</td>
<td>Image-based technique in a mind-body medicine approach and linking it to Asclepian dream incubation healing methods of Ancient Greece</td>
<td>Laner Cassar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>Bipedalism and Obstetrics – an Exercise in Darwinian Evolutionary Medicine</td>
<td>Yves Muscat Baron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>Eros, Thanatos and the Inception of Psychoanalysis. The Case of Sabina Spielrein, Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud in the Filmic Versions of Roberto Faenza and David Cronenberg.</td>
<td>Gloria Lauri Lucente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:50</td>
<td>Life after Posthumans: Some Reflections on Recent Scholarship at the Humanities-Medical Sciences Interface</td>
<td>Ivan Callus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:10</td>
<td>Business meeting with refreshments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defining Woman in Medical Discourse and Science Fiction
Clare Vassallo
Department of Translation & Interpreting Studies, Faculty of Arts

This paper is an early attempt to look at the intersection between women’s bodies as described in medical scientific discourse, in particular through Michel Foucault’s influential works on discursive practices in The Birth of the Clinic and The History of Sexuality, and women’s voices in the genre of science fiction.

The combined notions of ‘writing’ and ‘the body’ have come together in some of the most influential works of late 20th century feminism. In terms of the novel, we associate the term ‘writing on the body’ with Jeanette Winterson, and in criticism, with Helene Cixous ‘The Laugh of the Medusa, amongst others.

Science fiction is known to be a male-dominated form with an absolute majority of men writers and a predominantly male readership, despite the fact that one of the earliest important works in the genre is Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein. As more women are drawn to the genre as writers and readers it has been noted that themes regarding gender and race have become more prominent in the possible worlds, both utopias and dystopias, created by writers such as Marge Piercy, Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Joanna Russ and Margaret Atwood.

This short version of the paper will seek to examine some of these intersections by focusing on works of science fiction written by women, and by examining some of the distinctions brought to the genre, such as hard or soft science fiction, and the manner in which genre writing creates structures of expectation and models its own readers. In addition, the issue of academic recognition of the genre will also be discussed.

The Pinocchio Syndrome and the Prosthetic Impulse
Victor Grech
Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

The Pinocchio syndrome, an anthropocentric desire to become human, is depicted frequently in science-fiction (SF), and is the opposite of the prosthetic impulse. The genre portrays the former as the acquisition of a human biological body along with mental and psychological characteristics that include at least three components: the desire to acquire ‘qualia’, the expression of intentionality of the John Searle strong artificial intelligence type, and an application of an Abraham Maslow motivational pyramid, with a desire for self-actualisation. These three facets are briefly described, and are then used in a short reading of the Pinocchio syndrome in SF through the character of Star Trek’s Commander Data, a sentient and humanly created android. This paper also briefly explores the prosthetic impulse with particular reference to the “Borg” race in Star Trek, an ultimate Marcusian cyborg species that assimilates entire species into a collective mind, with loss of individualism. The collective is subservient to the Borg Queen, in hive-insect fashion, bringing order to chaos in search of perfection while inhabiting spaces that are quintessentially postmodern.

The Pinocchio syndrome is contrasted with the prosthetic impulse, with particular reference to a showdown between Data and the Borg Queen. It is shown that the Pinocchio syndrome, when expressed by beings that are physically and/or mentally superior to mankind, lead to a rejection of self-actualisation. With regard to the prosthetic impulse, many of these narratives admonish against a too-complacent embracement of the ultramodern which may decompose into the postmodern. SF cautions against extreme prosthetic makeovers, encouraging us to abandon any Faustian pacts that we may be tempted to make with technology. A common feature in these narratives is their predilection for the demolition of the boundaries between organic and machine. It would behove us to cautiously go where no man has gone before.

On Flesh and Prosthesis
Victoria Sultana
Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences

The main idea of this paper is to show how man-made tools for extending the amputated body – i.e. prostheses - move from being regarded as foreign by the amputee to becoming an inherent part of the body and the person. In anthropological language, we are
concerned with the processes through which prostheses become embodied. What makes this question interesting is that an object which is totally external, inert, and definitionally non-human is absorbed by the human subject so that it becomes an intimate part of not just the body but also the person. The incorporation of these extensions is an absorptive process, a “phenomenological osmosis”, whereby the body absorbs novel capacities when called to do so.

Normally the prosthesis is regarded at the beginning by the amputee as alien and unapproachable. In fact, seeing the prosthesis for the first time can be a shock. The “phenomenological osmosis” that leads to the incorporation with the body is flexible. This connection is not always achieved as the prosthesis does not always become part of the body and the self. The process of the coming together of flesh and prosthesis is replete with physical and psychological problems. Drawing on anthropological fieldwork, this paper will explore case studies showing how amputees reacted to these difficulties. They show that human beings are highly inventive at turning the non-human into the human.

The Medical effects of space travel - myths and facts
Gordon Caruana Dingli
Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

More than five hundred people have travelled into space over the last fifty years, most of these have reached low earth orbit and only nine Apollo moon flights have ventured into deep space. The actor and producer Tom Hanks has stated ‘Going to the moon was a magnificent undertaking, not just a technological endeavour, but an artistic one.’

Spaceflight is brutal and space is a hostile environment. Science fiction overcomes the difficulties of spaceflight with various fictional techniques. The effects of space on living tissue were researched by sending various animals and human tissues into space until Yuri Gagarin was launched into space in 1961. This was followed by longer flights and the first female – Valentina Tereshkova.

The main medical effects of space travel are due to weightlessness and radiation. Astronauts suffer from motion sickness and psychological problems and they are susceptible to injuries and disease while in space.

Man will continue to explore space in the future, probably driven by commercial reasons. Moon bases and long trips to Mars will subject the fragile human body to increased risks. Further research is required to find solutions to the hazards of space travel.

The Discourse of Doctor - Patient Encounters - A Sociolinguistic Perspective
Lydia Sciriha
Department of English, Faculty of Arts

Discourse analysts study both formal and informal naturally-occurring conversations. Though there is a substantial body of research on the discourse of different dyads (teacher – student; attorney – witness; wife - husband), there are relatively few studies which focus on doctor-patient encounters.

The aim of this presentation is to examine communication patterns between doctors and their patients in different cultures and to show whether such encounters are symmetrical or asymmetrical. Who controls the conversation? Who asks the most questions and who interrupts the most?

The Accoucher looks at the Torah
Charles Savona-Ventura
Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

A compendium of Judaism’s founding legal and ethical religious texts, the books of the Torah and other Jewish Apocrypha texts have a wealth of reflections that deal with the various human lifecycles including the reproductive cycle during pregnancy as perceived by human society at the time. These writings reflect on fertility; on concepts relating to aetiology of miscarriages and malformations; and further relate the contemporary management of labour and delivery besides describing a number of abnormal obstetric cases.

High fertility was strongly desired being viewed as an enrichment of the extended family group in both nomadic and farming societies. In spite of this, high parity was not the norm with individual women generally having less than seven offspring as a result of the “conception-pregnancy-lactation” cycles within a limited
reproductive period. Infertility was considered a punishment and drastic measures such as the use of surrogacy, contributory insemination and fertility-promoters such as mandrake were resorted to. In spite of this, there were occasions when attempts were made to prevent a pregnancy using natural or surgical means – coitus interruptus and sterilization. Miscarriages were believed to be caused by physical trauma; while malformations were believed to be due to shape associations.

The delivery process is often detailed, this being closely reminiscent to Egyptian practices. While the majority of cases progressed uneventfully, some complicated cases – premature breech delivery, prolonged labour, twin deliveries – are described resulting sometimes in very adverse outcomes including recourse to abdominal delivery, foetal destruction, and maternal death.

The pregnant woman living in a contemporary medically-protective society is apt to forget that pregnancy is in itself full of risk to herself and her infant. Only continuous medical vigilance has enabled the significant reduction in obstetric mortality.

**Persons with M.E. in Malta. Between critical realism and social constructivism**

Maria Brown & Michael Briguglio

**Faculty of Education and Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts**

Focusing on persons with ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis), this study will involve a dialectical interplay between critical realist and social constructivist theories, thus enabling a holistic analysis which co-constructs natural and social factors characterizing the everyday experiences of such persons.

The study will critically engage with both the individual experiences and social interactions of persons with ME, and will verify whether social policy is inclusive of their universal and particular needs.

The study will analyze how such persons interact within a broader social context. Particular focus will be made to how they define their situation with others; how they experience health services, employment, education, social welfare, and other social policy areas; and whether they experience a sense of community with other persons with ME.

In this respect, this study focuses on the need to analyse both the natural experiences of persons with ME, as well as the way how they socially construct their needs in a social policy context.

The main research questions of the study are:

- From a critical realist stance, what are the everyday experiences of persons with ME related to their condition?
- From a social constructivist stance, how do persons with ME socially construct their identity with respect to social policy?
- What is the interplay between the natural and the social with respect to persons with ME?

The research questions will be replied through interpretative qualitative analysis of experiences of such persons. In this respect discourse analysis will be carried out through interviews with persons with ME; with representatives of the NGO ME Sufferers Malta and through analysis of documentation of ME Sufferers Malta.

**Epilepsy: the falling sickness in literature and in the movies**

Janet Mifsud

**Department of Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery**

Epilepsy is the most common serious neurological condition of the brain across all ages, affecting around 1% of the population. It is characterised by recurrent, very often unpredictable, seizures of various types and syndromes. The vast majority of persons with epilepsy can lead seizure free and normal lives due to availability of modern therapy. Yet it is often a hidden and misunderstood medical condition, and this can greatly impact on a person’s social and personal life. These misconceptions and stigmatizations have, unfortunately, often been transposed in literary works and cinema, despite the fact that it is well documented that various authors and actors have had epilepsy.

Literary accounts of epilepsy is frequently viewed predominantly as a social stigma, with epilepsy being associated with stress and emotions (Shakespeare, George Eliot, Rosamund Pilcher). On the other hand, authors...
who had personal experience of epilepsy offer a more humanised perception of this condition (Dostoevsky, Tennyson, Charles Dickens, Agatha Christie). In movies, epilepsy is rarely viewed as a treatable disorder and is usually distorted in such a way that it is associated with demonic or divine possession, genius, psychiatric illness, or crime (Andromeda Strain; One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest). More recently, some movies have attempted to show or mentioned epilepsy in a more humane light (Lost Prince; Garden State; King’s Speech). It is to be noted that there have been, in turn, numerous reports that some 3D movies (Avatar) and flashing lights/scenes in certain movies and adverts can in turn induce epilepsy (Twilight: Breaking Dawn; original 2012 London Olympic Logo). Recommendations will be made for increased awareness and sensitization of the literary and cinematic communities in order to ensure appropriate accurate descriptions and knowledge about such medical conditions.

The face: an overlap of science and art
Joseph Cacciottolo
Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

The human face represents the most accessible facet of a person’s unique identity. It is the main medium for social interaction and from one’s early infancy, facial expressions are used as vehicles for social referencing. It is possible to study the face from a myriad of angles, and this paper addresses two specific ones: capturing visage and transplantation of the face.

Physiognomic theories, and attempts to use facial features to gain a glimpse of personality, date from Plato’s time. There were several revivals over the years, notoriously as pseudo-science in Nazi Germany, and more recently as subject of experiments testing association between facial appearance and political allegiance.

Reading the face is a basic competence for a physician, and as such, this skill is taught and assessed as part of the process of medical education. At a popular level, the face, presented as an icon, is easily read, both overtly and subliminally. The face has been painted from time immemorial: indeed the human face has been used as canvas much earlier that it was painted on stone, papyrus or canvas.

Reconstructing the face may be essential in order to correct congenital defects or burn injury. Cosmetic surgery on the face may not only be prompted by genuine concerns and needs, but also by vanity and frivolity. Forensic artists are adept at constructing a face up from skeleton, while the faces of Egyptian mummies have been reconstructed for anthropological purposes, using computerized tomography.

This paper broadly addresses man’s attempt at capturing the face, initially in the form of roughly fashioned mammoth ivory in Palaeolithic times and currently through digital imaging and manipulation.

Transplantation of the face, science-fiction until 2005, is a rapidly developing surgical procedure and this paper seeks to provoke discussion of the benefits, risks and ethics of this novel technology.

Art and arthritis
Carmel Mallia
Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

Rheumatology is a branch of medicine that studies arthritis, a large group of diseases that affects bones and joints. Art and rheumatology, and indeed medicine, are very diverse fields but they share a number of areas of overlap. One of these areas is the depiction of abnormalities in paintings, particularly classical paintings especially of the Flemish school. It is presumed that the model being painted had the particular abnormality which was faithfully reproduced by the artist. Some of these abnormalities are so clear that a definitive diagnosis can be made. In other cases, though an abnormality is present, it is debatable whether it really represents disease or whether it is a variation in style of a particular artist or a particular era or school of art. The tall figures with long tapering fingers in the paintings of El Greco, which superficially resemble patients with Marfan’s syndrome, are an example. Some artists themselves suffered from some form of arthritis which, in certain instances had a profound effect on their work. The study of art in medicine, in addition to serving as a challenge to the diagnostic acumen of the clinician, can also enhance the appreciation of art itself.
Translating Medical Terms into Maltese: Practice or Theory?
Charles Briffa
Department of Translation & Interpreting Studies, Faculty of Arts

During the last few years, the number of scientific publications for general consumption has increased. On the one hand, education is producing an increasing number of non-professional but well-informed readers with a rising interest in health issues. On the other hand, the media are popularising medical terms which today form an integral part of everyday language. This, very often, necessitates translating material from English and the translation of medical terms from English to Maltese follow certain criteria which may at times present problems. This paper describes the main processes utilised by translators in this area of study. Most European languages share the same Graeco-Latin roots for word formation in medical terminology, which reflects the preservation of Latin as the language of science until the 19th century – a historical fact that contributed to a vast amount of lexical similarities in medical nomenclature among the various languages. Knowledge of Graeco-Latin roots generally contributes to the understanding of medical terms, and this has great relevance in professional translation. Part of this paper will focus on the encounter of the Semitic element with non-Semitic elements (including Romance and English elements).

Languages and evolution: the family tree and historical stratification.
Joseph Brincat
Department of Italian, Faculty of Arts

The origin of language and of the various languages has been an intriguing topic for thousands of years. The Bible contains short remarks that hint at a few concepts, like divine origin (God created the universe by utterances, then spoke to Adam who understood and contributed by giving names to animals, trees, etc.), monolingualism (“and the earth was of one tongue”), multilingualism as a punishment (in Babel “the language of the whole earth was confounded”), and identity between “language” and “nation” (Genesis). The New Testament represents polyglottism as a gift and antidote to the bane of multilingualism (Pentecost). These concepts dominated Western culture until Leibniz devised fieldwork, and popular belief is still influenced by them.

The classical controversy between Nature and Convention (Plato and Aristotle) raged on into the Middle Ages (St. Augustine and St. Thomas) and led to the search for universals (Chomsky) and typology (Greenberg).

The biological concept inspired pragmatic experiments, raising newborn babies in isolation (Psammeticus I, Frederick II of Swabia, King James of Scotland), and received fresh impetus from Herder and Darwin. The 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of celtomania, etruscomania and punicomania (which infected De Soldanis, Preca and Strickland). Herder (1772) patriotically asserted identity between language and nationality, a concept embraced heartily by the Romantics in 19th century Germany and Italy. Darwin (1859) suggested that “a perfect pedigree of mankind, a genealogical arrangement of the races of man would afford the best classification of the various languages now spoken throughout the world”. This inspired Schleicher (1862) to draw up the family tree of Indo-European languages, which became very popular although it was immediately confuted by dialectology and linguistic geography because the process of diversion excluded contact and promoted purism. Nowadays linguistic contact is a very productive field.

Recent progress in genetic studies has revived interest in the relationship between genes and words, but both linguists and geneticists proceed with caution when studying maps showing the overlap of populations and languages.

Childhood Obesity in Malta: a sociological perspective
Gillian Martin
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts

The ‘obesity epidemic’ has been the subject of extensive cross-disciplinary research. Current statistics show that the top ten countries for overweight eleven year olds within the European Union include six from the Mediterranean region, with Maltese children in the top three. Data for the adult population is even more worrying with Malta having the highest rate of male overweight. The purpose
of my research is to add a sociological perspective to the academic and bio-medical discussion in the wake of these statistics. It aims to focus on relational dynamics and highlight the ‘invisible and unintended relationships’ that may hold between society and biology - to shift the focus of the debate from that of ‘deviant bodies’ to the social processes within which these are embedded.

Reference will be made to data gathered during local qualitative research with five year old and ten year old children and their families, where mixed methods were used to explore the values and attitudes adults and children hold in respect to overweight children, and the way that these influence affective/power dynamics linked to food consumption.

Data are analysed to explore the interplay of issues related to ‘aesthetics’, ‘health’ and ‘happiness’ as linked to the overweight body shape in children; to focus on what it means to be overweight and to have an overweight body as a child growing up locally; and to highlight the way power dynamics in child-care strategies and negotiations influence parenting and nurturing techniques in ways that have knock-on effects on food consumption.

Hospitallers: Healing the Body, Healing the Soul, c.1580-c.1700
Emanuel Buttigieg
Department of History, Junior College

The Hospitallers were a military-religious order of the Catholic Church, whose foundation can be traced back to a hospice for pilgrims in late eleventh-century Jerusalem. From then onwards, the institution changed dramatically, but service to the ‘poor sick of Christ’ remained its defining feature into early modern and contemporary times. The Order ran a sophisticated hospital in Malta called the Holy Infirmary, where all Hospitallers gave some level of service. Outside of the Infirmary, many Hospitallers also provided herbal and magical remedies to their brethren and others, in particular women, in what can be described as a manifestation of medical pluralism. The Hospitallers combined medical, religious and magical knowledge to assist those in need, but their medico-magical knowledge also responded to the need of the Hospitallers to prevent injuries during combat and heal wounds as rapidly as possible. Hence, this paper will seek to unravel the way religion, health, disease and gender intertwined in Hospitaller healthcare.

Processes in Clinical Reasoning
Arthur Felice
Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

The human mind is hopefully readily available and cheap to use. Analysing as well as refining its functions is well worthwhile.

A certain degree of uncertainty is inherent in clinical practice. This is not something to be ashamed of, or to hide. In fact absolute ‘certainties’ belong not to the realms of science, but to those of the religions, where the belief in particular certainties has a central role.

Diagnosis, and this includes clinical diagnosis, is often defined as opinion revision from imperfect information. The processes used by clinicians to reach conclusions, in this aura of imperfect data, constitute the subject of this talk. This involves exploring the interface between clinical medicine, logic, mathematics and artificial intelligence.

Image-based technique in a mind-body medicine approach and linking it to Asclepian dream incubation healing methods of Ancient Greece
Lafer Cassar
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education

Throughout history, powerful procedures have been used to induce experiences of depth in individuals and groups. They usually took place in sacred contexts, during special occasions such as initiation rituals and religious ceremonies. For ancient or tribal people such endeavours yielded experiences of images that for them were considered as pharmakon. Asclepian dream incubation in ancient Greece, is a case in point. The reported healing effects of waking dreams in Asclepian temples were both for physical as well as psychological illness since: ‘bodily illness and psychic defect were for the ancient world an inseparable unity’ (Meier, 1967). This mind-body unity was somehow lost during the Enlightenment period.

In this paper, I will be arguing how image-based therapies are helping to restore this old divide. Whilst these image-based therapeutic
approaches testify to the ‘medicinal’ usefulness of the imagination they are also helping to reawaken the lost imagination in Western medicine European modern psychotherapy, in the first half on the twentieth century, gave us two very important image-based therapeutic methods. These are Carl Jung’s Active Imagination and Robert Desoille’s Directed Waking Dream. These two psychotherapists, left an unacknowledged influence on the current use of guided imagery techniques both in Europe and the United States. Both these image-based therapeutic approaches catered for neurotic difficulties and were also highly effective in psychosomatic difficulties. More recent guided imagery approaches, which were once looked down upon, are now finding widespread scientific acceptance. They are being used to teach psychophysiological relaxation, alleviate physical conditions such as chronic pain and immunity dysfunctions, and help patients prepare better for surgery and medical procedures. Image-based therapies are offering us a possibility to bridge the gap between allopathic (Hippocratic) and complementary (Asclepian) medicine and helping us shape a new understanding of an integrated medicine approach.

Bipedalism and Obstetrics - an Exercise in Darwinian Evolutionary Medicine

Yves Muscat Baron
Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

At birth the human neonate is so helpless that without continual maternal assistance it will not survive. This developmental delay of Homo sapiens compared to other similar mammalian species indicates that developmentally, humans are born 12 months too early.

The reduction in gestational age at childbirth may be an evolutionary adaptation to two crucial factors. The first factor is the contraction in the pelvic girdle diameters so that H. sapiens may become efficiently bipedal for most of his wakeful daily life. The erect posture in humans is maintained for more than 60% of daily life compared to 14% in Pan troglodytes (chimpanzee). The second factor is the increase in brain size. Whereas the brain of P. troglodytes weighs 155g at birth, the human foetal brain weighs 400g.

An Obstetric dilemma therefore presented itself with the contraction of the pelvic girdle through which an enlarged foetal head had to gain passage. This in itself may have been a strong evolutionary determinant in the survival and development of the H. sapiens species. As Friedrich Nietzsche exclaimed, possibly with Teutonic rhyme and reason, “Was mich nicht umbringt macht mich starker”, translated into “What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger”.

Even “starker”, childbirth in humans is prolonged and fraught with complications. In P. troglodytes the average duration of labour is only 2 hours, whereas in H. sapiens the mean duration is 8 hours. Evolutionary pressures on childbirth may have prejudiced the differential incidence of preterm delivery (8% - 12%) and post-term labour (3% - 4%). Birth at both extremes of gestational age threaten maternal and foetal wellbeing.

Throughout this presentation, the author will describe the interaction of the altered habitat and the evolution of bipedal adaptation in hominids. Bipedal adaptation contracted the pelvic passageway in the face of an enlarged foetal brain. Consequently evolutionary processes may have influenced the gestational age at which childbirth occurred, in response to the powerful forces of natural selection in the hominid species.

Eros, Thanatos and the Inception of Psychoanalysis. The Case of Sabina Spielrein, Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud in the Filmic Versions of Roberto Faenza and David Cronenberg.

Gloria Lauri Lucente
Department of Italian, Faculty of Arts

The paper takes its cue from an extraordinary archival discovery that was to shed light on a story of sexuality, passion, rivalry and deceit which fiction itself could not have conceived any better. In 1977, a carton containing the diaries of Sabina Spielrein and her extensive correspondence with Carl Gustav Jung and Sigmund Freud was discovered in the basement of the Former Institute of Psychology in Geneva. As a result of this discovery, Spielrein and her relationship with two of the pioneers of psychoanalysis emerged from oblivion and
inspired a series of counterreadings to the suppression to which her story had been relegated for so long. Two of these counterreadings on which the paper will be focusing are the films by Roberto Faenza (*Prendimi l’anima*, 2002) and David Cronenberg (*A Dangerous Method*, 2011). Reference will also be made to another cinematic corrective which took the shape of *My name was Sabina Spielrein* (2002), a docudrama by Elisabeth Marton. The paper will focus primarily on the portrayal of the interrelated themes of transference and countertransference on which the relationship between Spielrein and Jung was based against the backdrop of the Jung/Freud rupture. In the process, it will examine the deployment of such techniques as narrative structure, voice-over narration and montage in these three markedly different representations of Spielrein, one of the first female psychoanalysts who had been both Jung’s first patient before becoming his lover as well as Freud’s epistolary confidante and colleague.

**Life after Posthumans: Some Reflections on Recent Scholarship at the Humanities-Medical Sciences Interface**

Ivan Callus  
*Faculty of Arts*

This paper is a short bibliographic essay on art, literature and scholarship that both upholds and critiques the idea of interdisciplinarity between the humanities and the medical sciences. It starts by briefly looking at the way in which figures like Orlan, Stelarc, and Eduardo Kac have extended the idea of ‘the prosthetic aesthetic’, which troubles perceptions about the body and the nature of the human and in so doing undermines the basis of interdisciplinary work in the humanities and the medical sciences. Arguing that the distinction between the arts and the humanities is enough to problematise that interdisciplinary field in any case, the paper then refers to studies within posthumanism that contradictorily reasserts and questions the ground on which that field bases itself. The focus falls mostly on the work of Eugene Thacker (*/Biomediation/; /The Global Genome/; /After Life/), whose research is crucial in this context as it has been seen as epitomising not only the interface between the humanities and the medical sciences, but also, significantly, between the humanities and the ‘post-humanities’. In the process, ongoing and contrastive reference is made to work on the same theme in mainstream posthumanism, among others by Bernard Stiegler. The paper concludes by suggesting that the literary fiction of the neuroscientist David Eagleman allegorises the tensions running in the work of the artists and theorists referred to in the rest of the paper, all of which ultimately centres on what life after (post)humans could possibly be.