

Rapaport-Klein Study Group

<http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein>

c/o Nadine Desautels

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February 2013

Dear *Rapaport-Klein Study Group* Members,

We are pleased to invite you to the 51st Annual Meeting of the *Rapaport-Klein Study Group* which will be held on June 7-9, 2013 at the *Austen Riggs Center* in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

We think you will be very pleased with this year's program, which is entirely dedicated to a common theme: unconscious processes. Below we present the speakers, with abstracts of their presentations and brief biographical statements.

On Friday evening, we are delighted to have **Heather A. Berlin, Ph.D.**, who will present, "**The Neural Basis of the Dynamic Unconscious**". Heather Berlin is a cognitive neuroscientist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at *Mount Sinai School of Medicine* in New York. She explores the complex interactions of the human brain and mind with the goal of contributing to improved treatment and prevention of impulsive and compulsive psychiatric disorders. She is also interested in the neural basis of consciousness and dynamic unconscious processes and is a Visiting Scholar at the *New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute*. Heather is currently a presenter on the new international *Discovery Channel* series *Superhuman Showdown* and has appeared on *BBC World Service*, *BBC Radio 4*, and *StarTalk Radio*. She received her Ph.D. from the *University of Oxford* and MPH from *Harvard University*.

Abstract of Heather Berlin's talk: A great deal of complex cognitive processing occurs at the unconscious level and affects how humans behave, think and feel. Scientists are only now beginning to understand how this occurs at the neural level. Understanding the neural basis of consciousness requires an account of the neural mechanisms that underlie both conscious and unconscious thought, and their dynamic interaction. How do conscious impulses, thoughts, or desires become unconscious (e.g. repression) or, conversely, how do unconscious impulses, desires, or motives become conscious (e.g. Freudian slips)? How can our decisions and behaviors be influenced by stimuli processed outside of awareness, and how are people able to their override unconscious drives by force of will (e.g. quitting smoking, not acting impulsively or compulsively, regulating emotions)? Research taking advantage of advances in technologies, like neuroimaging, has led to a revival and re-conceptualization of some of the key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, and progress at understanding their neural basis. According to psychoanalytic theory, unconscious dynamic processes defensively remove anxiety-provoking thoughts and impulses from consciousness in response to one's conflicting attitudes. Within this classical framework, the processes that keep unwanted thoughts from entering consciousness include repression, suppression and dissociation. I will discuss studies from psychology and cognitive neuroscience in both healthy people as well as in neurologic and psychiatric patients that are elucidating the neurocircuitry of repression, suppression, and dissociation.

Saturday morning will open with a presentation by **Philip S. Wong, Ph.D.**, entitled, “**Contemporary learning theory and the psychological unconscious**”. Philip Wong, who is a member of our group, is Associate Professor in the Ph.D. Program in Clinical Psychology at *Long Island University-Brooklyn*. His research explores the implicit emotional and motivational dimensions of personality and psychopathology. Phil’s research has its origins in his predoctoral and postdoctoral training at the *University of Michigan*, where he studied with Howard Shevrin, Martin Mayman, and others. His clinical interests include anxiety and affective disorders, as well as the experiences of ethnic minorities and East Asian Americans. He has a private practice in New York City.

Abstract of Philip Wong’s talk: Contemporary learning theory has significantly broadened its horizons from the days of stimulus-response experiments with rats. New applications of learning theory to psychopathology (e.g., fear and anxiety) have emerged, incorporating complex psychological constructs such as consciousness. This paper explores some of the ways that contemporary learning theory can influence, and be influenced by, psychoanalytic theory. He will examine the implications of selected recent findings in the study of associative learning for our understanding of unconscious processes and, ultimately, of therapeutic change.

Following lunch, **Morris N. Eagle, Ph.D.**, will present, “**A New Look at Unconscious Processes: Conceptual Analysis, Empirical Findings, and Clinical Formulations**”. Morris needs little introduction, having been a member of our group for many years and co-chair from 1990 to 2001. Currently he is Professor Emeritus, *Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies*, Adelphi University, and Distinguished Educator-in-Residence, *California Lutheran University*. He was the recipient of Sigourney Award in 2009. Among his most recent publications, he is the author of *From Classical to Contemporary Psychoanalysis: A Critique and Integration* (Routledge, 2011), and *Attachment and Psychoanalysis: Theory, Research, and Clinical Implications* (Guilford, 2013). He was Erikson Scholar at Austen Riggs in 1993; gave the Plenary Address at the *American Psychoanalytic Association* in 2010; and received the Norman Haskell Award from the *San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute* in 2013.

Abstract of Morris Eagle’s talk: He is working on a book that examines core psychoanalytic concepts in the light of conceptual analysis and empirical findings, both clinical and non-clinical; and asks in what ways we need to modify these concepts in the light of the analysis and findings. In his talk he will present one chapter of this book in which he examines the concept of unconscious mental processes.

There will be ample time for continued discussion of our Saturday presentations at the end of the day. Cocktails at the Lippmann’s completes our Saturday.

On Sunday, following our business meeting, **John Bargh, Ph.D.**, will address the group with a presentation entitled, “**The Social-Cognitive Unconscious**”. John Bargh received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the *University of Michigan*, where he studied with Robert B. Zajonc. He was on the faculty at *New York University* from 1981-2003, and is currently Professor of Psychology at *Yale University*. His research has focused consistently on automatic or unconscious influences on social perception, behavior, and goal pursuit. In 1982 he received the Dissertation award from *Society for Experimental Social Psychology*; in 1989 the Early Career award from *American Psychological Association*; in 2006 the Donald Campbell Award for career contribution to social psychology, from *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*; in 2011 he was elected to the *American Academy for Arts and Sciences*.

Abstract of John Bargh's talk: In normal perceptual activity, environmental stimulation activates internal mental representations, so that we see trees, cars, and clouds instead of the booming buzzing confusion of infancy. This is a natural and automatic process by the age of 4 or so. From the inception of the field of cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1967) an important question, and debate, has concerned the extent of this initial automatic activation of internal representations: how much information and what kinds are activated without conscious intent or awareness of the process? Social cognition research starting in the 1980s has shown that more than just semantic knowledge is activated: stereotypes about social groups are triggered by just the physical features associated with that group, and behavioral tendencies (as in mimicry and imitation) are activated as well. The domain of social automaticity research has been extended to motivations and goal pursuits as well, demonstrating a cognitive route to unconscious motivations. The most recent research on unconscious motivation, on its underlying mechanisms as well as important behavioral and affective consequences for the individual, will be presented along with some implications for health behaviors and self-regulation.

Our website remains <http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein> to review the history of every meeting since the beginning of our group including many of the papers presented at our meetings (this year program's web page is <http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/june2013.htm>). If there are any changes in your e-mail address, please notify Paolo at <migone@unipr.it>. Again we expect that some of the papers presented this year will be posted (already two papers by Heather Berlin have been posted, they are linked to the program's web page). Any suggestions for improving our website are welcome and should also be sent to Paolo.

We need to remind you that dues (\$100) and fees for guests (\$50) need to be paid as soon as possible. Space is limited and we request no more than one guest per member. Kindly email Craig Piers (craig.piers@williams.edu) as soon as possible to let us know if you are inviting a guest. Overnight accommodations should be made soon since, as you know, it is busy time of the year in the Berkshires. Members who wish to stay at the Red Lion Inn should call 413-298-5545 before May 12 and refer to "Group Reservation # 177508: Rapaport-Klein Rooms."

We look forward to seeing you once again and enjoying our weekend together.

Sincerely,

Craig Piers, Andrew Gerber, and Paolo Migone, *Co-Chairs*