Leverhulme Lecture Series

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31 January, 7 February and 14 February 2011 at 6.30pm David Sizer Lecture Theatre, Francis Bancroft Building Mile End Campus

A series of three lectures exploring late antique, medieval, and early modern representations of the interior self. Principal emphasis will fall upon narrative fictionalizations of the self; literary narratives will be augmented with legal, historical, and theological instances. Among other conclusions, these lectures will suggest that pre- and post-modern conceptions of the self share many assumptions about the inevitability of interior conflict, mixed boundaries between the self and the world, and the reflexivity of self-understanding.

6.30pm, 31 January 2012: Psychomachia and the Medieval Self Francis Bancroft Building

Supercilious litterateurs never tire of ridiculing him, but Prudentius's late fourth century allegory of warfare between vices and virtues established a genre that endured for a thousand years, and that offered sophisticated new insights into the interior and outward constitution of the self. This agonistic self, founded in images of division and struggle which resonate with Freudian psychology and other more contemporary theories of mind, will be pursed in writings by Philo of Alexandria, Prudentius's Psychomachia, and both versions of the Roman de la Rose.

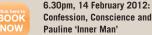


6.30pm, 7 February 2012: Inventing Intention

Francis Bancroft Building

Earlier concepts of intention were floating around, but Abelard (together with Heloise and twelfth century contemporaries) fostered an ethical

revolution by establishing intention as an inescapable evaluative norm. Decoupling sin from deeds or actions, Abelard argued that sin did not occur without inward consent, rendering selfexamination of motive an essential element of the ethical life. Examples of medieval thinking on this matter will be drawn from Procula's intentions in dissuading her husband Pilate from condemning Christ, legal narratives taken from the Plea and Memoranda and Coram Rege Rolls, and Chaucer's 'Friar's Tale' and 'Prologue' to the Legend of Good Women.



Confession, Conscience and the Pauline 'Inner Man'

Francis Bancroft Building

This lecture addresses Christianity's two central technologies of the self-technologies which occasionally intersected but normally competed in their aspiration to probe motivations and actions. Each system suspects the other: the sacrament of penance tries to delimit conscience, which it

regards as a dangerous free-lancer; conscience would act independently but proves liable to err when it stands on its own. Laid bare in this lecture are some of the tensions which culminate in the sixteenth-century Reformation. Texts to be considered include Piers Plowman, Jacob's Well and Calvin's Institution of the Christian Religion.

Paul Strohm is Leverhulme Visiting Professor at Queen Mary, University of London, for Winter-Spring 2012. He was previously Anna Garbedian Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University and J.R.R. Tolkien Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford. He is author of a half-dozen books on medieval literature, history, and culture including Social Chaucer (Harvard, 1989), England's Empty Throne (Yale, 1998), Theory and the Premodern Text (Minnesota, 2002) and, most recently, Conscience: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford 2011).



advance if you wish to attend. Please click the button on the right and follow the instructions to make a booking. You will then be

Q Queen Mary University of London

Map and Directions

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David Sizer Lecture Theatre, Francis Bancroft Building

Further Information

Events Office via events@gmul.ac.uk or telephone 020 7882 5895.