



Holism: possibilities and problems

An international interdisciplinary conference¹
Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex, UK
8 – 10 September 2017

Call for papers

Confirmed speakers include:

**George Hogenson, Christian Kerslake, Harald Atmanspacher, Inna Semetsky,
Joe Cambray, Joshua Ramey, Paul Bishop**

This international, interdisciplinary conference will explore the possibilities and problems to which the concept of holism gives rise, both academically and in practice.

Across many areas of contemporary culture we hear the concept of holism being invoked, as in holistic science, holistic spirituality, holistic healthcare, and holistic education. While there are different varieties of holism, each case implies a perspective in which the whole of a system is considered to be more important than the sum of its parts. Advocates of holism associate it with desirable qualities such as inclusion, integration, balance, and wider vision and champion it as a remedy for the fragmentation that is considered to beset the modern world. Critics argue that holism is vague, erases differences, and, by subordinating individual elements to a superior whole, ultimately leads to totalitarianism.

¹ Part of “‘One world’: logical and ethical implications of holism’, a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK; see <https://oneworldprojectholism.wordpress.com>

- What are the varieties of holism?
- What is the ‘whole’ to which holism refers?
- Why does holism have such cultural salience at the present time?
- Why does holism attract such strong positive and negative valuations?
- How can we study holism at a requisite depth to determine its nature and ethical implications?
- Where does a ‘whole’ begin and end?
- What conceptions of difference are evident in the play between a whole and its elements?
- What presuppositions about unity and identity may be implicit or explicit in holistic thought?
- What processes, synthetic or otherwise, might be involved in the production of ‘wholes’?
- What problems might the ‘balance’ of a ‘whole’ entail?

Two major twentieth-century thinkers, each of whose work is a productive site for in-depth exploration of concepts of the whole, are the Swiss depth psychologist **C. G. Jung** (1875-1961) and the French philosopher **Gilles Deleuze** (1925-1995), and important strands of the conference will engage with their work, individually and in comparison. However, other approaches to the possibilities and problems of holism are equally welcome.

We invite contributions from both established and emerging scholars and practitioners in a wide range of disciplines, including psychoanalysis, philosophy, politics, psychology, history, the arts, science, education, health care, architecture, and spirituality.

Submitting an abstract

- Please submit abstracts of up to 250 words to ckhmcm@essex.ac.uk by **Friday 17 February 2017**.
- On one page please include title and abstract but no author details; on another page (of the same file) please include full name, title, address, email, and institutional or professional affiliation.
- Standard paper presentations will be for 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion.
- Proposals for other formats such as panels, workshops, performances, and posters will also be considered.
- Decisions of acceptance will be communicated by Friday 17 March 2017.

Organizing committee

Professor Roderick Main
Dr David Henderson
Dr Christian McMillan

Contact

For enquiries contact Christian McMillan at ckhmcm@essex.ac.uk

Registration

Details of conference registration will be available shortly. See <https://oneworldprojectholism.wordpress.com>