



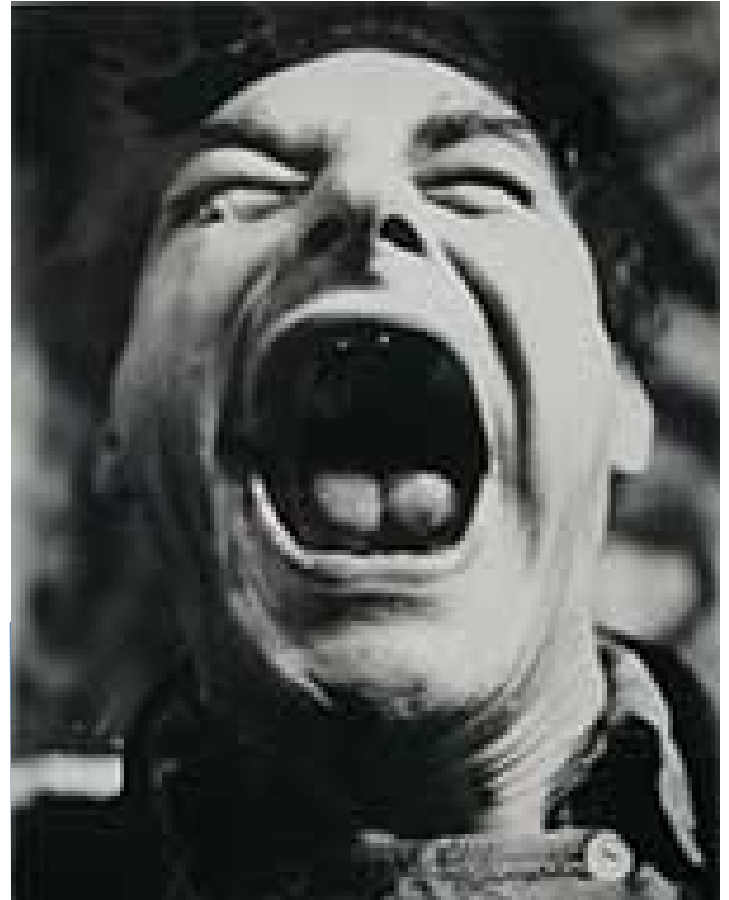
THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

THE SCHOOL OF HISTORICAL STUDIES, THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF ECONOMIES
RESEARCH HUB AND THE SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION PRESENT

LIBIDINAL ECONOMY, SEXUAL REVOLUTION AND BIOPOLITICS

This paper draws on a book-in-progress on the history of libidinal economy since the 18th century. It begins by distinguishing two, opposed, models of the libidinal economy of revolutions, the petit-bourgeois and socialist, or Freudian and Reichian models: one predicated on a vision of (libidinal) expenditure as depletion or loss, the other on a vision of expenditure as generating (libidinal) wealth. Illustrating how these models have influenced revolutionary movements as disparate as the Bolshevik, Gandhian, Philippines Huk and 1960s countercultural movements, the paper focuses on two radical experiments in 'communising' libidinal economy: the first from mid-nineteenth-century America (the Oneida Community), the second from late-twentieth-century Austria (the Friedrichshof Commune). It argues that these failed utopian experiments in reinventing subjectivities, sexualities and economic relationships - in a word, bios - challenge some of the basic assumptions of contemporary philosophers of biopolitics such as Roberto Esposito, whose recent essay, 'Totalitarianism or Biopolitics' (*Critical Inquiry* 34: 4, 2008) would be useful preparatory reading for the seminar.

David Bennett is Reader and Associate Professor in English at Melbourne University. He has published extensively on libidinal economy and the politico-cultural history of psychoanalysis. He is currently convening an international conference on 'Psychoanalysis, Money and the Economy' for the London Freud Museum, 2-4 July 2010.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DAVID BENNETT

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