EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS EMERITI
EAPE webinar in Association with RCPsych HoPSIG, PhilSIG,
Hellenic Psychiatric Association and the Speculative Psychiatry Group

Title: Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981): Two important and contrasting figures in Mental Health and Beyond

18 March 2026 20:00-21:30 CET (19:00-20:30 London; 21:00-22:30 Athens)

Introduction

In 2026, anniversaries of Emil Kraepelin (100 years since his death) and Jacques Lacan (125 years since his birth) invite renewed reflection on two contrasting legacies in psychiatry. This event brings their traditions into dialogue, exploring diagnosis, biology, language and subjectivity in mental illness. It addresses contemporary challenges in psychiatry and will interest psychiatrists and academics concerned with mental health and culture.

Emil Kraepelin is widely regarded as a foundational figure in the emergence of psychiatry as a medical discipline, shaping diagnostic classification in ways that continue to inform contemporary practice. Jacques Lacan, by contrast, occupied a more marginal position within academic psychiatry, yet his work exerted a profound influence on philosophy, literature, the arts and wider cultural theory. Apart from Freud, few psychiatrists have had a comparable impact beyond the clinic. Despite their markedly different methods, professional settings and clinical orientations, both thinkers addressed fundamental questions concerning mental illness, subjectivity and meaning.

This event offers an opportunity to examine the contrasts and convergences between their approaches and to consider their continuing relevance for psychiatry in the twenty-first century. Key themes include the relationship between biology, psychology and social context; the role and limits of diagnosis and classification; and the importance of language, communication and human relationships in mental health and illness. Particular attention will be given to the biopsychosocial model and to differing conceptions of biology, including Lacan's notion of the "Real".

At a time when research in the neurobiology of mental disorders is advancing rapidly, and when digital technologies and artificial intelligence are transforming modes of communication, Lacan's formulation of the unconscious as structured like a language has acquired renewed contemporary interest. Set alongside Kraepelin's empirically driven classificatory project, this contrast opens wider questions about the future direction of psychiatry and its relationship to medicine, the humanities and society.

The event will be of interest for psychiatrists and all those concerned with mental health, culture and European intellectual traditions.

Paul Hoff is President of the Central Ethics Committee of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences. A former professor at RWTH Aachen, he served from 2003–2021 as head psychiatrist and deputy medical director at the Psychiatrische Universitätsklinik Zürich where he remains an Emeritus Professor. His work focuses on psychopathology, history and ethics.

Andrew Hodgkiss is a retired Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and Lacanian analyst. Author of two monographs on chronic pain and cancer psychiatry, he served as Lead Clinician at King's Health Partners and Honorary Senior Lecturer at King's College London. He teaches at the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research and holds roles with psychoanalytic and psychiatric bodies.

Darian Leader is a psychoanalyst and founding member of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research, former President of The College of Psychoanalysts-UK, and fellow of the Freud Museum. He has authored widely translated books on psychoanalysis, held visiting professorships internationally, and writes regularly for the Guardian and Times.

Learning Objectives:

- Review the legacy of Emil Kraepelin for psychiatry
- Reflect on the the contemporary status of psychiatry as a medical specialty
- Review the legacy of Jacques Lacan for psychiatry
- Reflect on the significance of Jacques Lacan's theories of subjectivity, the unconscious and desire in the contemporary predicament of psychiatry
- Explore issues relating to research, training and clinical practice in relation to the biopsychosocial model of psychiatry in the 21st century

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20.00 - 20.10	**Chair and Introductory Remarks** **George Christodoulou**, *President of E.A.P.E.* **George Ikkos,** *Co-Chair, EAPE MH Section*
20.10 - 20.35	**Paul Hoff (Zurich):** Beyond conceptual history: Emil Kraepelin's, Karl Jaspers' and Arthur Kronfeld's views on psychiatry may not only inform but also guide our present-day debate
20.35 - 20.40	Respondent: **Anastasios Dimopoulos (London)**
20.40 - 20.50	**Q&A**
20.50 - 21.20	Lacan and Psychiatry 2026 **Andrew Hodgkiss and Darian Leader (London)**
21.20 - 21.25	Respondent: **Michel Botbol**, *(Brest) Secretary EAPE MH Section*
21.25 - 21.35	**Q&A**
21.35 - 21.40	**Closing Remarks** **Dusica Lecic-Tosevski,** Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts **Nikos Christodoulou,** University of Thessaly, Hellenic Psychiatric Association *(discussants)*

of the Webinar
Program