

Dr. Todd Dufresne



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Philosophy

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Website: <http://philosophy.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=4>
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Key Words Describing Areas of Research

Social & Cultural Theory, Psychoanalysis, Continental Philosophy, History of Medicine

Research relevance (importance of the research and how it will benefit Canadians)

Dufresne's work is unusually cross-disciplinary, focused on Critical Freud Studies but grounded in social and cultural theory. Given Freud's own place as a neurologist and physician devoted to philosophical questions about consciousness, his work routinely crosses the history of science, medicine, psychiatry, psychotherapy, sociology, history, and literary criticism. Dufresne is currently researching the early history of trauma, most especially the debate over the aetiology of railway spine, even as he edits a new work on Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" for Broadview Press. Dufresne aims to bring some much-needed clarity to historically significant debates about the history of medicine; clarity that helps us to better understand and appreciate just how muddled our thinking remains even today about the legacy of Freud and psychoanalysis.

Trauma, Freud, & Beyond: Cross-Disciplinary Research

Dufresne is currently analyzing the rhetoric of trauma as found in the years just before the birth of psychology proper, namely, in the 1860s. This work is historical and interpretive, grounded in the lectures on "railway spine" delivered by a once-famous London surgeon, John Eric Erichsen. Dufresne claims that this work provides a pre-history to the Freudian era which just ended. Called "The Wreckage of Interpretation," he expects a completed manuscript to be ready for publication as a small book within two or three years.

Dufresne also continues to forge ahead on other curiosity-based research projects close to his traditional area of expertise. One work-in-progress is called *Subtracting the Future*, a book-length analysis of Freud's late texts. He is also slowly building up a new area of expertise at the crossroads of culture and economic development. In 2005 Dufresne co-wrote (with Dr. Clara Sacchetti) and presented a lecture on this work, which will appear in Dr. Thomas Dunk's forthcoming edited collection with the Centre for Northern Studies.