

## **Lecture series: Between Foucault and Lacan: Critical Perspectives on psychic life and power**

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This course focusses on the critical perspectives on the psychological and social condition enabled through an engagement with the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. Although the work of these two theorists is often considered antithetical, there are a series of fascinating convergences between their respective 'post-structural' and psychoanalytic theorizations that prove enabling of innovative forms of social critique. Moreover, a benefit of engaging both theorists simultaneously is the 'cross-over' effect of thinking Lacan as a theorist of power and Foucault as a theorist of the psychological.

#### **Day 1: Friday....**

Lecture and discussion: 12.00 – 14.00:

#### **Spatial subjectivities and the powers of place**

##### **Summary:**

Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia provides an effective analytical model for how we might grasp something of the intersections of subjectivity and space, and better appreciate the powers of place. This lecture will introduce a Foucauldian approach to the analysis of spatial-subjectivity, providing an overview also of Foucault's 'heterology', that is, his tentative methodology of identifying and exploring heterotopia. The lecture will conclude by reflecting on differences and resonances between Foucault's 'post-structural' and psychoanalytic conceptualizations of spatial subjectivity.

##### **Reading:**

Bachelard, G. (1994) *The poetics of space*. Beacon Press: New York. (Chapter 1: From Cellar to Garrett).

Bingley, A. (2003) In here and out there: sensations between self and landscape. *Social and Cultural Geography* 4 (3), 329-345.

Foucault, M. (1967) Of other spaces. Available online:

<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>

Hook, D. (2007). Foucault, psychology and the analytics of power. London & New York: Palgrave. (Chapter 4: Space, discourse, power: Heterotopia as analytics).

14.00-15.00: Break

15.00-17.00

Reading workgroups

Reading 1: Foucault, M. (1967) Of other spaces. Available online:

<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>

Reading 2: Bachelard, G. (1994) *The poetics of space*. Beacon Press: New York. (Chapter 1: From Cellar to Garrett).

17.00-18.00

Reports from reading workgroups and discussion.

**Day 2: Saturday...**

**10.00-11.30: Lecture and discussion:**

### **The experience of madness**

#### **Summary:**

The book that announced Michel Foucault's arrival as a key 'post-structuralist' intellectual, 'History of Madness', was at first only translated into English in a much abbreviated form as 'Madness and Civilization'. What has, as a result, often been elided, is the extent to which Foucault's earliest work occurred very much in the margins in the psychological. The phenomenological attention to the problematic of human experience, a topic that much of his later genealogical work explicitly rejected, is likewise worth retrieving. Reviewing the new translation of the full text, published in English in 2006, enables a fuller response to the question of what the early Foucault thought of the notion of experience as a means of historical critique.

#### **Reading:**

Dreyfus, H.L. & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. London & New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M. (1967). *Madness & Civilization*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (2006). *History of Madness*. London: Routledge.

Hook, D. (2007). *Foucault, psychology and the analytics of power*. London & New York: Palgrave.

Macey, D. (1993) *The lives of Michel Foucault*. Vintage: London.

11.30-13.30

Reading workgroups

Reading 3: Foucault, M. (2006). *History of Madness*. London: Routledge. (sections on 'The experience of madness' and 'The insane').

Reading 4: Foucault, M. (2006). *History of Madness*. London: Routledge. (sections: 'The mad man in the garden of species' and 'The transcendence of delirium').

13.30-14.30

Break

14.30-15.30: Lecture and discussion:

## Logical time and the trans-subjective

**Summary:** Lacan's contribution to Freud's idea of 'group psychology' takes the form of a series of reflections on the well-known dilemma of the 'prisoner's dilemma'. This puzzle allows Lacan to offer a theory of inter-subjectivity that differentiates between 1) the subjective, 2) the inter-subjective and 3) the trans-subjective. Such a distinction is of great importance when it comes to accounting for the unpredictable quality of 'public opinion' and in grasping the fact of a type of 'social objectivity' instantiated in social norms and suppositions. Lacan thus draws attention not only to the perennial questioning that underscores communicative interchange, but also to the double mediation qualifying social identifications (i.e. it is not just what certain others think of me, but of what the trans-subjective 'big Other' thinks).

### References

- Evans, D. (1996). *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London & New York: Routledge. (Section on time (p. 206)).
- Hook, D. (2013). [Towards a Lacanian Group Psychology: The Prisoner's Dilemma and the Trans-subjective. \*Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour\*, 43, 2, 115-132.](#)
- Hook, D. (2013). Logical time, symbolic identification, and the trans-subjective. In G. Sammut, P. Daneen & F.M. Moghaddam (Eds.), *Understanding the self and others: Explorations in intersubjectivity and interobjectivity*, pp. 112-128. London & New York: Routledge.
- Lacan, J. (2006). Logical time and the assertion of anticipated certainty. In B. Fink (Trans.), *Écrits*. (pp. 161-175). New York & London: W.W Norton.
- Pluth, E. & Hoens, D. (2004) What if the other is stupid? Badiou and Lacan on 'Logical time'. In P. Hallward (Ed.) *Think again: Alain Badiou and the future of philosophy*, pp. 182-190. London: Continuum.

15.30-17.00

Reading workgroups

Reading 5: Pluth, E. & Hoens, D. (2004) What if the other is stupid? Badiou and Lacan on 'Logical time'. In P. Hallward (Ed.) *Think again: Alain Badiou and the future of philosophy*, pp. 182-190. London: Continuum.

Reading 6: Hook, D. (2013). Logical time, symbolic identification, and the trans-subjective. In G. Sammut, P. Daneen & F.M. Moghaddam (Eds.), *Understanding the self and others: Explorations in intersubjectivity and interobjectivity*, pp. 112-128. London & New York: Routledge.

17.00-18.00

Reports from reading workgroups and discussion

## Day 3: Sunday....

### 10.00-11.30: Lecture and discussion:

#### 'Nixon's full speech': Full versus empty speech

##### Summary:

The L-schema, one of Lacan's earliest 'mathemes' provides a conceptualization of ever-present pitfalls of 'empty' speech as it prevents and interrupts the process of 'full' speech. Used in a variety of ways by Lacanians, this diagram provides a means of discriminating between the Imaginary (ego-functioning) aspect of communication and the 'full' or Symbolic dimension of communication occurring on the subject-Other axis. Once applied to a practical example, such as that of Richard Nixon's unexpected revelations during the course of his recorded interviews with David Frost, this model of communicative theory offers much of value in respect of that crucial factor of social power: 'the Other'.

##### Readings

- Dolar, M. (1999). Where does power come from? *New Formations*, **35**, 79-92.
- Hook, D. (2008) 'Absolute Other: Lacan's "big Other" as adjunct to critical psychological analysis?', *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, **2**, (1), pp. 51-73.
- Hook, D. (2011). Empty versus full speech: Imaginary and symbolic registers of communication. In D. Hook, B. Franks & M. Bauer (Eds.). *Social Psychology of Communication*. Palgrave.
- Hook, D. (2013). Nixon's 'full speech': Imaginary and Symbolic registers of communication. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, **33**, 1, 32-50.
- Homer, S. (2005). *Jacques Lacan*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Žižek, S. (2006). *How to read Lacan*. London: Granta. (Chapters 1 & 2).

11.30-13.30

Reading workgroups

Reading 9:

Žižek, S. (2006). *How to read Lacan*. London: Granta. (Chapters 1 & 2).

Reading 10:

Dolar, M. (1999). Where does power come from? *New Formations*, **35**, 79-92.

13.30-14.30

Break

14.30-15.30

Lecture and discussion:

#### The symbolic and the unconscious

##### Summary:

Lacan's notion of an external as opposed to an internal unconscious, an unconscious enabled through and only accessible via the productions of language, features as perhaps the most misunderstood and ignored element of post-Freudian thinking. This lecture aims briefly to underscore various of the ramifications of Lacan's insistence on the unconscious as 'the discourse of the Other', and of 'the unconscious structured like a language'. Doing this sheds light on the fact of the irreducibly 'trans-subjective' nature of the unconscious, which is symbolic in its functioning and irreducible both to a depth psychological notion of the intra-psychic and crude models of a collective unconscious.

### Readings

- Bowie, M. (1991). *Lacan*. London: Fontana.(Chapter 3: Language and the unconscious).
- Benvenuto, B. & Kennedy, R. (1986). *The works of Jacques Lacan: An introduction*. London: Free Association Press. (Chapter 4: The Rome discourse).
- Dor, J. (2000). *Introduction to the reading of Lacan: The unconscious is structured like a language*. New York: Other Press. (Part 1: Linguistics and the formation of the unconscious, pp. 11-82).
- Fink, B. (1995). *The Lacanian Subject: Between language and jouissance*. Princeton University Press.
- Muller, J.P. & Richardson, W.J. (1982). *Lacan and language a reader's guide to Écrits*. New York, NY: International Universities Press. (Chapter 3, 'The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis').
- Dunand, A. (1996). Lacan and Lévi-Strauss. In R. Feldstein, B. Fink & M. Jaanus (Eds.), *Reading Seminars I & II: Lacan's return to Freud*, pp. 98-109. SUNY Press: New York.
- Hook, D. (2013). Tracking the Lacanian unconscious in Language. *Psychodynamic Practice*.19, 1, 38-54.
- Soler, C. (1996). The symbolic order (I). In R. Feldstein, B. Fink and M. Jaanus (Eds.), *Reading Seminars I & II Lacan's return to Freud*. (pp. 39-46). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Thom, C. (1981). The unconscious structured as a language. In C. McCabe (Ed.), *The talking cure*. (pp. 1- 44). New York, NY: St Martin's Press.
- Zafiroopoulos, M. (2010). *Lacan and Lévi-Strauss or the return to Freud*. London: Karnac. (Section in Chapter 2: 'The Rome report: "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis', pp. 129-156).

15.30-17.00

Reading workgroups

Reading 11: Bowie, M. (1991). *Lacan*. London: Fontana.(Chapter 3: Language and the unconscious).

Reading 12: Fink, B. (1995). *The Lacanian Subject: Between language and jouissance*. Princeton University Press. (Chapter 2, 'The nature of the unconscious').

17.00-18.00

Reports from reading workgroups and discussion

## **Day 4: Monday....**

10.00-11.30: Lecture and discussion:

### **The hermeneutics of the subject**

In Foucault's Collège de France lectures in the 1981-82 academic year, he turned away from his own early rejection of ostensibly humanist notions of self and subjectivity and focussed on how the idea of 'the care of the self' was conceived during antiquity. The problems of the ethical formation of the self, he argues, form the background to our contemporary questions about subjectivity and remain at the centre of contemporary moral thought. This lecture will pick out select moments in the first four of Foucault's lectures on 'the hermeneutics of the subject'.

### **Reading**

Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. Palgrave: London & New York.

Gallagher, C. (2000) 'On First Looking Into Foucault's "History"', *The Letter: Irish Journal for Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 20, pp. 1-27.

11.30-13.30

Reading workgroups

Reading 13: Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. Palgrave: London & New York. (Sections: Chapters 1 and 2, '6 January 1982, first hour and second hour', pp. 1-42).

Reading 14: Foucault, M. (2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*. Palgrave: London & New York. (Sections: 'Course Summary' and 'Course Context', pp. 491-55).

13.30-14.30

Break

14.30-15.30

Reports from reading workgroups and discussion

15.30-16.00

Open discussion on common themes