

**Speaking of Lacan
Reading Group
Reading Lacan's Seminar VII:
The Ethics of Psychoanalysis
April-June, 2010**

To: All Participants

From: Mavis Himes
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The ethics of psychoanalysis will allow me, far more than anything else, to test the categories that I believe enable me, through my teaching, to give you the most suitable instruments for understanding what is new both in Freud's work and in the experience of psychoanalysis that derives from it.

_____ Lacan, 18.11.59

I propose then that, from an analytical point of view, the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire.

_____ Lacan, 06.07.60

The seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-60) introduces the reader to the subversive nature of Lacan's teachings by focusing on the questions of transgression, desire and the Law. Using a number of Freud's texts as a springboard, Lacan returns to the pleasure principle and the reality principle to introduce us to Das Ding, *jouissance* and the problematics of desire. He then explores his unique understanding of sublimation and creatio *ex nihilo*, the paradoxical nature of *jouissance* and the tragic dimension through a rereading of Sophocles's *Antigone*. Ending with questions related to the moral goals of psychoanalysis and the desire of the analyst, Lacan concludes that there is no other good than that which serves to pay the price for access to one's own desire.

In this reading group, we will discuss some of Lacan's provocative conclusions. We will read closely and together selected chapters from Lacan's seminar with a focus on his elaboration of Das Ding, the precursor of *objet a*; on *jouissance*; and on the ethical position of psychoanalysis. We will try to answer such questions as: What is the subject of psychoanalysis? What does it mean to speak of the desire of the analysand? of the analyst? What does sublimation have to do with ethics? How is *jouissance* related to the drives, to transgression? What is an ethical position of the analyst?

Suggested Readings:

- Lacan, J. Book VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-60)
- Lacan, J. "The Freudian Thing, or The Meaning of the Return to Freud" in *Ecrits*
- Freud, S. "Project for a New Scientific Psychology." SE, vol.1, selected readings
- Freud, S. *Civilization and its Discontents*, SE. vol, 21

Date: Thursdays, April 15, 22, May 6, 13, 27, 2010
Time: 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Place: Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE)
252 Bloor St. W.
Room: 8-192 (8th floor)
Fees: \$10.00 per session

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
Please RSVP by e-mail

Registration Form

Name: _____

E- mail: _____

Phone no.: _____