

Speaking of Lacan
Seminar: March and April, 2008

To: All Participants

From: Mavis Himes
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Title: The Nature of Knowledge and the Desire of the Analyst
Presenter: Dr. Mavis Himes

What is asked of the psychoanalyst . . . is certainly not what emerges from the subject supposed to know on which, by hearing it a little bit askew, as one usually does, it has been thought possible to found the transference. I have often insisted on the fact that we are not supposed to know very much at all. What analysis establishes is this, which is quite the opposite. The analyst says to whoever is about to begin – “Away you go, say whatever, it will be marvellous.” He is the one that the analyst institutes as subject supposed to know.

_____Lacan, Seminar XVII, 22.1.58

What must there be in the analyst’s desire for it to operate in a correct way?
The analyst’s desire is not a pure desire. It is a desire to obtain absolute difference a desire which intervenes when the subject is in a position to subject himself to it.

_____Lacan, Seminar XI, 24.06.64

Transference first appeared in psychoanalysis as an obstacle in the course of free association, as a silence in the middle of the speech, and as a passion that involved the presence of the analyst. According to Freud, transference was both a necessity and an impediment in the analysis.

By contrast, the analyst as ‘the subject supposed to know’ (*le sujet suppose savoir*) is a key concept in Lacan’s elaborations of the transference. For Lacan, the transference is grounded in the fact that someone (the analysand) believes in a certain knowledge on the part of the other (the analyst). The ‘subject supposed to know’ must allow the unconscious to develop as a knowledge where something is always wanting. But Lacan further claims that the analyst must make his knowledge function in terms of a truth which has consequences and therefore can only be half-said.

In his seminar on The Psychoanalytic Act (1967-68) Lacan says “At the start, the analysand picks up his staff and puts on his knapsack to go to meet the subject

supposed to know at the rendezvous.” This seemingly simple notion suggests some of the following questions which will be discussed in this seminar: what is it that the analyst knows, what is the nature of analytic knowledge (*savoir*), what is the difference between truth and knowledge, and what does it mean to speak about the desire of both the analyst and the analysand.

Suggested Readings:

Freud, S. The Dynamics of Transference (1912) Vol. XII, *The Standard Edition*
Freud, S. Observations on Transference Love (1915) Vol. XII, *The Standard Edition*
Lacan, J. Seminar XI *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*, Chs. 10, 18, 19
Lacan, J : Selected Handouts

Date: Fridays, March 29, April 11, April 25, 2008
Time: 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.
Place: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (O.I.S.E.)
252 Bloor St. W. (at St. George St.)
Room: 8-220
Fees: \$25.00 per session

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
Please RSVP by e-mail

Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

E- mail: _____

Phone no.: _____

