Course Objectives: Is there such a thing as an accident in psychoanalysis or does everything have psychical meaning? This seminar will begin by showing that there was always, from the very beginning, a radical thinking of the accident in Freud. We will begin with early Freud and his thinking of the accident in the late 1890’s looking not at the erogenous body but at the traumatized body. We will turn, then, to Beyond the Pleasure Principle, where, in the wake of World War I, we get a fully developed thinking of the accident (if we have time, we might even look at some 1915 texts on the war neuroses). We will look at how the notion of Nachträglichkeit is taken up by contemporary French psychoanalytic theory on the one hand (Lacan, Laplanche), and by continental philosophy on the other (Derrida, among others) and why, for example, someone like Catherine Malabou avoids it in her thinking of the "traumatic event.” We will also spend some time on the anti-psychiatry movement in order to understand Michel Foucault's interesting but symptomatic disavowal of Freud and psychoanalysis in his work (we will look in particular at Psychiatric Power and History of Sexuality I).

Course Requirements: Seminar participants are expected to keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss them in seminar. In addition, each student will be responsible for a seminar presentation. The seminar presentation, approximately 5 pages, should be a discussion of the assigned reading (including a clear exposition of its argument). How that discussion is presented is the presenter’s prerogative. NB: The seminar presentation must be distributed via email attachment to all seminar participants at least one day (Tuesday by 3:00pm) in advance of the seminar so that all participants are able to read it prior to the meeting. In addition, all students will be expected to write a 10-page paper (it is perfectly acceptable for this paper to be an extension of the presentation).

Texts


VERY PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Sept. 10  Introduction
2) Foucault, Psychiatric Power (final session)

Sept. 17  The Accident and the Question of Spatial Unlocatability
Recommended: 1) Malabou, Ontology of the Accident; Solms and Solms, Clinical Studies in Neuropsychoanalysis, chapter 8 [handout]

Sept. 24  The Accident and the Question of Temporal Unlocatability I (Sexuality)
Readings: 1) Freud, “Emma”; “Katharina”; 2) Laplanche, Life and Death in Psychoanalysis, chapters 1 and 2

Oct. 1  Sexuality and Metapsychology I

Oct. 8  Sexuality and Metapsychology II
Readings: Freud, “Repression,” “The Unconscious,” “Mourning and Melancholia”

Oct. 15  The Accident and the Question of Temporal Unlocatability II (Trama)
Readings: 1) Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle

Oct. 22  The Accident and the Question of Temporal Unlocatability III
Readings: 1) Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle

Oct. 29  (De)Structuring the Accident
Readings: 1) Derrida, “Autoimmunity”; 2) Malabou, Ontology of the Accident;

Nov. 5

Nov. 12