

Jacques Lacan Lectures

The Oskar Diethelm Library
DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry
Weill Cornell Medical College
525 East 68th Street
New York, New York 10065

Arranged and described by:
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Provenance

Copies of Lacan's lectures were donated anonymously in 1981 to the Archives of Psychiatry (now the Oskar Diethelm Library), New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. The originals are housed in France under the authority of Lacan's son-in-law and literary executor, Mr. Jacques-Alain Miller, 74 rue d'Assas, 75006 Paris.

There are no special restrictions concerning access. However, the lectures are not to be reprinted, circulated, or sold. The lectures are copyrighted. Publication rights are under the control of Mr. Miller. Permission of Mr. Miller will not be required for brief extracts of the lectures (not more than 300 words) used by researchers for critical analysis.

Biography

Jacques-Marie Lacan was born in Paris on April 13, 1901 and died on September 9, 1981. He was a controversial and influential psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Early in his career he worked with Henri Claude, an expert on schizophrenia at the Clinique des Maladies Mentales et d'Encéphale. From 1928 to 1929 he was attached to the Infirmerie Spéciale Près de la Préfecture de Police and trained with George de Clerambault, whose theory of mental automatism was a decisive influence. His training analysis with Rudolph Loewenstein lasted from 1932-1938. Controversy surrounding Lacan's ideas was epitomized in July 1953 when the International Psychoanalytical Association decided not to accord membership to Lacan and other analysts who had seceded from the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris.

Lacan was popular with both analysts and non-analysts, and his renown became international. It is principally through his contributions to cultural theory – theories of film, television, literature and art – that his reputation has been established in the United States. In France he is also known for his ideas on psychoanalytic theory and practice, psychiatry and neurology, and his links with linguistics and structuralism. He lectured on his “materialist” theory of language. He was a trend setter of the Paris intelligentsia. His writings are complex and often difficult to comprehend.

Many of Lacan’s ideas were introduced to the French and to international society by his weekly seminars. He founded the École Française de Psychanalyse (later called the École Freudienne de Paris). It consists of three sections: (1) Section for Pure Psychoanalysis, for the training of psychoanalysts; (2) Section for Applied Psychoanalysis, for therapeutics and clinical medicine; and (3) Section for Taking Inventory of the Freudian Field, for summarizing and censoring all publications in the field of psychoanalysis and the publication of new works.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of photocopies of Lacan’s lectures: “L’Identification,” numbers 1-26, which Lacan presented between 1961 and 1962; and “D’un Discours Qui Ne Serait Pas du Sémiotique,” numbers 1 and 7, presented in 1971. The Oskar Diethelm Library owns two copies of each of his lectures. The seminars are written entirely in French. Some Lacan lectures have been published in English. The copies owned are not the original French versions; some lectures have been transcribed in French three or four times. Lacan lectured on various aspects of psychoanalytic theory, Freud, the ego, and related technical matters.

Lacan’s ideas were disseminated to the public and psychoanalysts in the form of weekly seminars in Paris, and presented between 1952 and 1980. Before 1964 these were held at Sainte Anne Hospital. From 1964-1967, Lacan lectured at École Normale Supérieure. Some were given at the École Freudienne de Paris, which Lacan founded. In the 1970’s he began to lecture to a wider audience and gave public seminars at the Amphithéâtre of the Law School, Faculté de Droit.

Inventory

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