

## **Remains of Poststructuralism: Ethics, Trauma and Hermeneutics**

If you believe some accounts, poststructuralism was dead almost before it began. Its questioning of reason, objectivity and subjectivity made it irreconcilable with the intellectual standards which have governed rational debate in Europe since the Enlightenment. Yet the corpse of poststructuralism has refused to lie still in its grave. This lecture explores quite why it was perceived to be so threatening in the first place, before examining some of its more recent mutations. Ethical criticism, trauma studies and modern hermeneutics are part of the unsettled legacy of poststructuralism, however incompatible and diverse their aims and practices might initially appear to be.

### **Reading:**

Martha Nussbaum, 'Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature', in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1990), pp. 3-53.

Stanley Cavell, 'Introduction: Words for a Conversation', in *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 1-42.

Cathy Caruth, 'Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History (Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*)', in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 10-24.

Colin Davis, 'Conclusion: In Praise of Overreading', in *Critical Excess: Overreading in Derrida, Deleuze, Levinas, Žižek and Cavell* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 164-87.