

EDITORIAL

Lacan left the foundations and first story of a complex building behind him—as well as blueprints and plans for the upper floors—but the work of putting the rest in place has necessarily fallen to his successors. The legacy of Lacan is not really an edifice or system, however, but a corpus of teaching that does not fit comfortably in any established epistemological category or group of categories. By way of additional negative definition, we may say that psychoanalysis as Lacan conceived it is not a biological science; nor is it a hermeneutics of consciousness; nor is it a structuralist linguistics or anthropology; neither is it a psychology or a psycholinguistics.

But Lacan was a Parisian psychoanalyst by profession, and it is among Parisian psychoanalytic circles that his legacy is most vigorously alive. Paris is now undoubtedly the world center of psychoanalytic training with a Lacanian orientation. Though there are as many as fifteen private associations in France which lay claim to Lacan's work, the most important by far is the School of the Freudian Cause (*École de la Cause freudienne*), over which Lacan himself presided during the last year of his life (1980-81). It is the only association to be affiliated with the Foundation of the Freudian Field (*La Fondation du Champ freudien*), which Lacan had established in February, 1979. At that time, Lacan foresaw the dissolution of his own Paris Freudian School (*École freudienne de Paris*) as an inevitable precaution to prevent elements of rigidification and selectivity from reducing the vitality of his teaching to dogma.

The expression "Freudian Field" (*le Champ freudien*) was originally coined by Jacques Lacan as the title of a collection or series first issued by the Paris publishing house Seuil in 1964 (a series which continues today under the direction of Jacques-Alain Miller). Other publications

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of the Freudian Field are *Ornicar?* (the quarterly review of the Freudian Field) and the series *Analytica* and the *Bibliothèque des Analytica*. Though these are in no sense official publications of the Foundation, their theoretical orientation is the same. Outside France, however, it is a different matter: the Foundation of the Freudian Field promotes the creation of various serial publications and coordinates their activity. It is within the latter rubric that the *Newsletter of the Freudian Field (NFF)* inscribes itself.

The appearance of our new, twice-yearly Newsletter is the result of an initiative by Ellie Ragland-Sullivan and Jacques-Alain Miller. Its debut in the spring of 1987 comes in response to a rapidly growing interest throughout English-speaking North America in the work of Jacques Lacan. Though Lacan's name was certainly not unknown in the United States and Canada during the 1970s and early 1980s, the French psychoanalyst was associated rather loosely and misleadingly with "post-Structuralism," often perceived by North Americans as acoherent movement emanating from Paris after 1968.

The North American surge of interest in Lacan's work may be discerned in a string of recent colloquia, as well as a growing quantity of books and articles. There have been specialized meetings in Milwaukee (1984), Ottawa, Canada (1984), New York City (1984), Amherst, Mass. (1985), and, in 1986, workshops organized between New York City and the University of Paris VIII, as well as between Chicago-Paris VIII, and a conference at Louisiana State University (1986). Sessions and seminars have been devoted partially or entirely to Jacques Lacan at Modern Language Association annual conventions in Chicago (1985) and New York City (1986), the Austin Riggs Center in Massachusetts (1985-), the University of California at

Berkeley (1986-); and a new Lacan conference is planned in New York City for April, 1987. As for recent publications, among books alone we may cite: Stuart Schneiderman, *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan* (1980); Robert Con Davis, *The Fictional Father: Lacanian Readings of the Text* (1981); J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language: A Reader's Guide to Écrits* (1982); Stuart Schneiderman, *Jacques Lacan: The Death of an Intellectual Hero* (1983); Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose eds., *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne* (1983); Robert Con Davis, editor, *Lacan and Narration: The Psychoanalytic Difference in Narrative Theory* (1983); William Kerrigan, *Interpreting Lacan: Psychiatry and the Humanities* (1983); Jane Gallop, *Reading*

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Lacan (1985); Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (1986); Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy, *The Works of Jacques Lacan* (1986); Juliet Flower MacCannell, *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* (1986); and Stuart Schneiderman, *The Rat Man* (1987).

A surprising range of fields have already been touched by Lacan's teaching. In a recent print-out of 122 clusters turned up by a search under "LACAN, Jacques," for example, the Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data listed the following subject entries: topology, criticism, psychoanalysis and literature, knowledge, psychoanalysis—social aspects, psychoanalysis—political aspects, languages—psychology, sex (psychology), psychoanalysts—France—biography, psychoanalysis—France—history, structural linguistics, semantics (philosophy), anthropology, psycholinguistics, structuralism, subject (philosophy), dialectical materialism, existentialism, psychotic disorders, schizophrenia, Lacan in Italy, hysteria, conversion (psychoanalysis), personality, criticism and interpretation, subconsciousness and so on.

The Newsletter of the Freudian Field is sponsored by the Foundation of the Freudian Field, based in Paris. It seeks a step-by-step, clarifying role in diffusing greater knowledge and understanding of Lacan, and directs itself—above all—to an English-speaking audience interested in becoming better informed about a Lacanian orientation in clinical and theoretical studies. The areas of study are psychoanalysis, a critique of culture, film studies, and the theory of literature. *NFF* will publish translations from the French, including previously untranslated texts by Jacques Lacan, where permission is granted. A Calendar of Events will note conferences, study groups, workshops, or other events across the English-speaking world, as well as provide reports on such conferences. Another section is devoted to *Abstracts* (rather than conventional reviews) of pertinent books and articles.

Another important dimension of *NFF* will be its role in providing information concerning the possibilities of psychoanalytic study (yearly courses and seminars) being offered in Paris, the world leader in psychoanalytic innovation.¹ But, above all, *NFF* aims to set up the conditions favorable for a more discriminating reception of Lacan in the English-speaking world than he has had to date. Particularly in the United States, in the period from approximately 1968 until the present, Lacan's teaching has been received piecemeal, divorced from its formative context, and consequently lacking in overall sense. The

recent spate of books on Lacan will doubtless go some way towards remedying this situation, but these cannot take the place of a living forum of debate and up-to-date commentary. We hope that our *Newsletter* will fill this gap.

1. The School of the Freudian Cause distributes a directory of its almost 300 members, the vast majority of them being psychoanalysts, one half medical doctors, the other half lay analysts. The School is located in downtown Paris, between Montparnasse and the Latin Quarter, and it boasts an excellent psychoanalytical library, the only one of its importance to give free access to both students and researchers. Seminars are open and are not part of a course. One becomes a member of the School by approval of the Directorate, which assembles all relevant information on the candidate, in either their analytic practice and/or theoretical work.

At the University of Paris VIII (Saint-Denis) is the Department of Psychoanalysis, of which Lacan was Director from 1975 to 1981. The Department, currently under the direction of J. -A. Miller, counts many members of the School of the Freudian Cause among its ranks and shares the latter's theoretical orientation. It is, however, a separate University entity, and has no formal ties to the School. The Department, moreover, does not confer degrees in the exercise of psychoanalysis. Rather, it is open to doctoral students, whatever may have been their prior formation, and prepares them for the Doctorate in Psychoanalysis. The Department's "Section for Clinical and In-depth Studies" allows students to attend case presentations in various Parisian hospitals, and to participate in workshops on praxis, as well as theoretical seminars (Write: École de la Cause freudienne, 1, rue Huysmans, 75006 Paris, France; or Departement de Psychanalyse, Université de Paris VIII, 2 rue de la Liberté, 93526 Saint-Denis Cedex O2, France; or Fondation du Champ freudien, 31 rue de Navarin, 75009 Paris, France).