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*News from Over*  
*Seas*

Lacanian theory in America is primarily dispensed in small doses in university classes whose main foci are essentially elsewhere. Lacan remains anathema in psychology departments, and psychoanalysis has no recognized university status whatsoever. Analysts, analysts-in-training, psychotherapists, and social workers must generally rely on "outside reading" if they want to know anything about the French psychoanalytic scene.

The student or practitioner who makes the leap to the other side of the Atlantic will be well rewarded for his or her efforts. Aside from the attractions offered by a busy European metropolis, Paris offers a plethora of courses, seminars, clinical programs, and study groups (known as "cartels") specifically designed to facilitate the encounter with Lacan's theory and practice—from the ABCs right up to the most complicated of notions.

The idea underlying much of this work is not to try to bring students to "understand" Lacan's work just enough to use it to talk about something else, but rather to work and rework his concepts on the basis of a thorough knowledge of Freud as well as of Lacan's other sources. References, at times so off-handed as to pass unnoticed by English-speakers steeped in Anglo-American culture, come alive as professors at the University of Paris VIII at St. Denis and analysts at the *Ecole de la cause freudienne* restore the context of the debates which had been current when Lacan was writing. Light is shed on a great many of his concepts and even on the major thrusts of his work by those who were closest to Lacan while he was alive, and who are extremely well versed in French and European culture to boot. The radical differences between Lacan's approach to analysis and that proffered by the Anglo-Americans—eg., his constant concern with unconscious desire, and

19

with the letter as a starting point for interpretation—become plain to see, and his interest in the formalization of psychoanalysis as a science takes on shape and substance through elucidations of his graphs and mathemes.

The visitor to Paris will also have the chance to see Lacan's theory *at work*. To take but one example, IRMA, an association organizing a bi-monthly series of case presentations, provides a glimpse into how practicing Lacanians conceptualize the "raw material" presented by their patients, and struggle with questions concerning the timing and significance of their own interventions. The year 1986 saw a series of discussions revolving around the meaning of interpretation, and a new series of "Moments of the Psychoanalytic Cure," focusing on the beginning and end of analysis, construction, acting out, etc.

The clarifications requested and questions posed by the participating analysts point to the multilayered nature of interpretation, and one occasionally senses that new perspectives are opening up—that Lacanians are continuing to move forward on the basis of the distinctions and concepts formulated (though at times only sketched out) by Lacan himself.

20