

**ABSTRACTS OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES**

***Patrick J. Mahony. Freud and the Rat Man. With a Foreword by Otto***

F. Kernberg, M.D. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

Stuart Schneiderman. *Rat Man*. (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

Everyone interested in Lacan and Lacanian psychoanalysis should be delighted at the appearance of these two volumes dealing with Freud's pathbreaking and problematic *Bemerkungen über einen Fall von Zwangsneurose*, the case history of the "Rat Man." Written by practicing analysts trained in literary interpretation and scholarship, these works provide valuable insights into this seminal case history and powerful tools for further research and analysis regarding not only Ernst Lanzer, the Rat Man, but others as well. Schneiderman, a Lacan-trained analyst well-known to Lacanians, uses the case brilliantly to explain, illustrate, and develop Lacanian interpretive, "ethical," and technical practices. Mahony, a mainstream North American psychoanalyst and professor of literature, uses the methods of classical textual and biographical scholarship to illuminate Lanzer's condition and Freud's literary reshaping of Lanzer's analysis.

More specifically, Mahony brings his formidable skills in scholarship to bear on this examination of obsession. In Chapter 1, "Erratic Designs," Mahony gathers and synthesizes material from widely available sources—Freud's process notes, minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, Freud's letters, etc.—well as less accessible sources, such as records from the Oesterreichisches Kriegsarchiv and the archives of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna. From this material, Mahony pieces together the life of Ernst Lanzer, his relations, the places where he lived, worked, or vacationed, and so on. This chapter is particularly valuable and will certainly provide a solid foundation

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for many future studies of the case. The second chapter takes up this material and, with sensitive attention to the signifier in Lanzer's speech, develops some suggestive and often-though not invariably-convincing analyses of various of Lanzer's dreams, compulsions, and symptomatic acts.

In the brief third Chapter, Mahony turns to the treatment itself, arguing that it was far briefer and far less complete than Freud indicated. The fourth chapter then examines the history of Freud's views of technique, the irregularities in Ernst's treatment, and Freud's insensitivity to the negative transference in the case. The following chapter continues the discussion of technique by reference to the oral character of psychoanalysis, in the sense of the term developed by Walter J. Ong, Paul Zumthor, and others. The sixth chapter turns to the history of Freud's theory of obsessional neurosis, and the penultimate chapter followed only by a brief conclusion—goes on from content to form, examining Freud's style, the remarkable consistency of the what and the how of Freud's writing, and the gross inadequacies of Strachey's translation.

It should be clear to readers of Lacan that Mahony's project is in many ways very Lacanian. He returns to Freud, focuses upon the signifier, criticizes the Standard Edition, traces the history of Freud's concepts, etc. Indeed, Mahony even speaks of "deferred effect" (p. 175), adverts to the **subversion** of "the difference between language and metalanguage" (p. 195), refers to the "determining value of names" (p. 61), considers "the four basic types of discourse" (p. 135), and identifies metaphor and metonymy with condensation and displacement (p. 167). Moreover, Otto Kernberg begins his preface to the book by maintaining that, "One of the most exciting developments in psychoanalytic theory and technique has been the growing understanding of how linguistic style and structure and verbal expression reveal unconscious conflict. The psychoanalytic understanding of linguistics serves to enrich the analysis of the communicated content. Thus it is an understanding that has relevance for psychoanalytic technique as well as for theory" (p. ix). Praising "Patrick Mahony's contribution to this field," Kernberg characterizes Mahony's work in clearly-if unintentionally-Lacanian terms.

But no debt to Lacan is acknowledged in this book. Mahony refers to Lacan only twice, and both times it is in order aggressively to dismiss the "to-do" which Lacan makes when he "flies on" in work "peculiar" to French psychoanalysis (p. 55). In fact, Mahony goes so far

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as to indicate that the rhetorical reconstrual of the primary process is his own innovation. Thus, despite the very high quality of Mahony's book, it regrettably takes part in what might be called "the repression of Lacan." One can only hope that this repression, so widespread in North America today, will weaken, and Lacan's influence will come to be appropriately acknowledged.

Schneiderman's book neatly complements Mahony's—and not merely in its explicit, even grateful, Lacanianism. Not seeking the scholarly rigor of Mahony's volume, Schneiderman's work more than compensates by its interpretive subtlety and technical sensitivity. It is, in short, the best thing we have available in English on Lacanian psychoanalysis as a real clinical practice. No other work with which I am familiar so clearly illustrates Lacanian theory as it applies to therapeutic analysis, and thus so powerfully illuminates and so cogently defends that theory.

After a brief preface in which he explains his relation to Freud and the importance of a return to Freud, Schneiderman turns to his "Opening Statement," the introduction of the key concepts of his Lacanian re-reading of the case of the Rat Man: desire, demand, structure, the phallus. Here Schneiderman also emphasizes the themes of the following chapters: that "[p]sychoanalysis attempts in the best cases to render the unconscious accessible to verbalization" (p. 5); that "[a]s far as the unconscious is concerned content is always secondary in importance to structure" (p. 5); that the analysis of the transference, in its function as **demand** of the analysand, is central to any therapeutic analysis, and so on.

Chapter 2 turns to "Infantile Sexuality." Having summarized the major events in Ernst's infantile sexual development, Schneiderman returns to Ernst's fear that his parents could read his thoughts. Schneiderman connects this fear with the *sujet suppose savoir* and the analysand's transferential demand upon the supposed knowledge of the analyst, a demand which both propels and restrains the analytic process. Having contrasted this demand with the unconscious desire which is the true object of analysis, Schneiderman turns, in Chapter 3, to the rat torture, in order further to examine and specify this desire. Schneiderman approaches this specification by examining the repetitive structures which govern Ernst's life—the isomorphic structures of his pre-history, of his infantile and adult lives, and of the analytic situation itself.

The desire that one glimpses through an analysis of these structures,

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and of the signifier, is what Lacan calls the "truth" of the subject. However, Schneiderman argues, "Analysis is never a question of getting at the truth at any price" (p. 58)-thus an analyst must not only distinguish desire from demand, he/she must know how to **handle** the analysis, which is to say, in this context, the transference, and it is to this that Schneiderman turns in Chapter 4. Finally, Schneiderman's concluding chapter addresses the more general considerations surrounding the "Theory of Obsessional Neurosis" in a Lacanian framework. Here Schneiderman proposes a stunning re-interpretation of obsessional anality in terms of maternal demand and desire, and further develops points of technique and theory.

Although one cannot agree with everything an author says, Schneiderman's book is an extremely valuable addition to the Lacanian literature, in some ways the most valuable I have seen. Both Schneiderman's book and Mahony's should be read by everyone interested in Lacanian analysis and the return to Freud, though Mahony's book must be read with the discrepancy between its at least partially Lacanian subjectivity and its adamantly anti-Lacanian ego kept firmly in mind.

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***Critical Inquiry. Winter 1987. Volume 13, Number 2, "The Trial(s) of***

***Psychoanalysis."***

Judging by Francoise Meltzer's introduction to this issue, the more appropriate title would be "The Sentencing of Psychoanalysis." Meltzer has already decided that psychoanalysis is guilty of an unjustified imperialism into other areas of knowledge (e.g., history and literature). This **Inquiry** sentences psychoanalysis to (dis)placement next to, rather than above, other disciplines.

The (dis)placement is carried out in very different ways in the actual articles: an "archaeological" history of the concepts used in psychoanalysis; an explication of the historical context of psychoanalysis' dissemination (and censorship) to suggest a path for analyzing analytic theory; the addition of the "phantom" as a meta-psychological fact, which offers a means of detecting secrets throughout "the entire field of psychoanalysis"; a sociology of Freud's incorporation and refunctioning of the prevailing (racist) medical and biological models of his day; the placement of psychoanalytic theory "within reach of ordinary

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readers"; and challenging the placement of psychoanalysis in the realm of Science because of Freud's philosophical inheritance and his personalized version of analytic theory (his and his alone; thus, uninheritable as a Science).

Some of the articles grant psychoanalysis a reduced sentence, allowing it some (if not all) power over other disciplines: an application of psychoanalytic concepts to historiography; the use of psychoanalysis to desediment the "originary synthesis" of Marxist concepts leading to a post-Marxism; and the creation of a psychoanalytic formalism.

Two of the articles postpone sentencing through their reading strategies: a reading of *Interpretation of Dreams* from a single emblematic statement; and the discovery of the unpronounceable (M)other tongue of psychoanalytic feminism.

When the issue follows the other title, "The Trials of Psychoanalysis," it offers (perhaps against the editorial intention) important insights into translating psychoanalysis from the analytic situation to historiography and literary theory. Unfortunately, most of the articles that apply analytic concepts to history and literature avoid Lacan's theories; hence, they cut themselves off from the trials of contemporary psychoanalysis. Chief among the trials facing (Lacanian) psychoanalysis today is its 'a priori' rejection by other areas of knowledge (e.g., feminism, literary theory, and historiography).

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***Leo Bersani. The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art. New York:***

***Columbia University Press, 1986.***

What is the "constitutive sign of psychoanalytic thinking" (p. 9), and what grounds "the psychoanalytic authenticity of Freud's work" (p. 3)? According to Bersani, "an antagonism internal to thought itself" (p. 4): "the **work of thought itself**" involves an "equivalence between our most intense pleasures and a potentially catastrophic failure to adapt" (p. 6). That failure, Bersani argues, underwrites and condemns every theoretical attempt, psychoanalytic or otherwise, to account for the failure. My question: Does it account for Bersani's text?

Bersani's avowedly deconstructive reading of the Freudian corpus is organized into four chapters. "Theory and Violence" investigates the

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way Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* defines civilization as the antagonist of the individual but then, in his footnotes, identifies the two terms. Bersani finds the same dynamism—a destructive sexuality-grounding each of the terms that Freud initially sets in opposition.

"Sexuality and Aesthetics," on *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, argues that infantile sexuality is not a precursor of a later genital development which would be sexuality's telos in the history of the individual, but rather a separate sexual ontology. The ontology of infantile sexuality seeks to repeat and intensify the **tension** of the forepleasure that suffuses the polymorphous field. (Such tension, according to Bersani, seems to govern genital sexuality as well [pgs. 33-34].) But tension aligns sexuality not with pleasure but with unpleasure (and moves

sexuality beyond the pleasure principle). This leads Bersani to explore the possibility that sexuality is essentially masochistic, essentially "shattering," though it is a shattering that produces the human even while simultaneously threatening it.

In "Pleasures of Repetition," on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and "Freud's New World," on *The Ego and the Id*, Bersani continues his deconstruction by tracing out the claimed discrepancies between Freud's ostensible argument and a repressed or otherwise implicit counterargument. In both cases the argument is structured along the lines of a teleological narrative in which sexuality is "normalized"; the counterargument, Bersani says, enacts "an eroticized, denarrativized, and mobile consciousness" and offers "a view of the libidized ego as an ecstatically shattered ego" (p. 64).

In each of the chapters, then, Bersani seeks the textual indications "of the way in which Freudian speculation moves toward a disruption of its own categories" (p. 89). That disruption marks the "estheticizing" moment of Freud's text, the moment his text "problematizes its own formalizing and structuralizing aspirations" (p. 5). It is a moment anticipated by literature. And thus it is to Mallarme, de Sade, and others, including neo-Assyrian art, that Bersani looks to frame his chapters and elucidate the "shattering" that for Bersani characterizes the specificity of not just the Freudian body but the body of the human as well.

My question, again: If "Freud's work is a special kind of esthetic text," if this text "seeks to stabilize the perturbations of sexuality in a theory about the subversive, destabilizing effects of human sexuality on the human impulse to produce forms," and, finally, if in consequence the "formal replications" of the sexual in Freud's work are

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"already a movement which reflects (on) the collapse of formal relations, the precariousness of representational discourse itself" (p. 112), then what is the status of Bersani's theoretical speculations? From what position, according to what desire, has he written, and with what consequences for the representational aims of his text?

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**Jane Gallop. Reading Lacan. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985.)**

From the "PrefaStory" in which Jane Gallop considers her relation to "women's studies," to the "Postory," which relates a significant dream about her relation to Lacan, *Reading Lacan* is a story. It is a narrative within, from the perspective of, and converging with language, and thus, a story with a history. Gallop is perhaps at her best when relating her own history as a Lacan reader, that is, at telling her story. The question is whether her story helps one to "read" Lacan. But this is not exactly her question; Gallop offers her book as both a response to Lacan and "an orientation for a future reading" (p. 92).

Gallop's text invites the reader to ask what it means to read, what it means to speak-or to have the right to speak-about that over which one presumes to assert mastery, a text. The greatest gain one can achieve, she purports, is the realization that "one never [has] the right to speak" (pgs. 112-13). Yet this realization can only be used to undo authority from the position of authority, that is to illumine the self as fiction without denouncing it.

Gallop puts into practice one answer to the question she poses near the beginning: What might a "feminist practice of study . . . be, beyond the recognizable themes: women and sexual difference" (p. 18). The difference she does address is that between different kinds of knowing, and thus, the difference between kinds of reading, between ways of seeing ourselves as readers, our-selves as selves, our selves as fiction.

Preferring to be a transferrer of Lacan's thought-analyzing her transference onto the text-rather than a translator of Lacan's texts, Gallop uses her mastery of French to give herself the authority to speak about Lacan in English. She challenges the idea that Lacan's texts "read" like poetry, and ends up interpreting what is poetic in

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Lacan. Her style thus replicates the theory; language speaks Gallop in a way that shows that mastery is presumption, which Gallop already "knows."

Thus *Reading Lacan* emerges as a story of transference, from Gallop's acknowledging her desire of Lacan's approval, through her reaction to his death, to a rendering of his physical death into metaphor of the not-dead-yet-not-still-alive author which exists in Lacan's texts, to her "poststory" dream that Lacan approved of her and agreed to read her (now) finished book. This story is also an account of a kind of analysis, though she acknowledges that "reading texts is no substitute for the analytic act" (p. 54). If "the analyst's only task" is, as she says, to return "to the subject what the subject was saying so that the subject can recognize it and stop saying it" (p. 109), then her book is both successful and not. For one thing, she has left out a Lacanian account of how analysis "works." Her ending, which demonstrates that analysis is interminable, the transference unended, leaves an opening, however, for what Gallop is not yet able to read in Lacan-the Real.

By confusing the Real with the Derridean concept of the "original text" (p. 67) of which "no direct apprehension" (p. 70) is possible, and otherwise ellipsing it from her discussion, Gallop remains in a dyadic structure. The triadic formulation of Lacan's three orders is lost as Gallop plays mirror games between pairs of doubles-France and America, French and English, anticipation and retroaction, "nature" and "history." She recognizes that analysis' goal is to understand what structures one's imaginary effects (p. 70), but she concentrates on the horizontal movement between pairs of doubles, emphasizing that "analysis, according to Lacan, is the move from the imaginary to the symbolic" (p. 72) and misrecognizing the Real effect of unconscious structure. When she does discuss Lacan's formulation of the orders as a knot, the Real appears as a parenthetical element.

Perhaps Gallop's father/Lacan transference may be "read" as an unconscious denial of the third term. Gallop has "framed" this transference to try to escape what she sees as the trap of the Imaginary play of mirrors, in order to enter the Symbolic. Meanwhile, her whole text is trying to tell her that "something else is also going on" (p. 124).

So Gallop's fear/hope that she has "added nothing" to Lacan studies has been realized, but only in part. By acknowledging the fictionality of mastery, she has added an acknowledgment of the power of the Imaginary. Gallop ends her book with her "eyes open," because she is on to the "truth" that "desire spoils the perfect mastery of the dead

author" (p. 185). The reader closes Gallop's book knowing that for her (ambiguity intended), Lacan is not dead, the transference not ended, the search for the third term not over.

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**Juliet Flower MacCannell. Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986. xxi**

+182 pp. \$9.95 paper.

MacCannell takes what is essentially a feminist (object-relations theory) approach to Lacan's theory but her book is much more than an ideological tract. In fact, the book is a rather good introduction to some critics and/or expositors of Lacan. For example, MacCannell devotes an early chapter to readings of Lacan by such figures as Jacques Derrida, Catherine Clement, Stuart Schneiderman, Julia Kristeva, and Barbara Johnson. Following a careful reading of the exchanges among Lacan, Derrida, and Johnson over Poe's "Purloined Letter," MacCannell makes the sort of point she shall make throughout her book: "It is this kind of move-this very move toward 'the social tie'-that I have been attentive to in Lacan's work. The preponderant weight is on the systems made by the signifier, to be sure, but I have sought for, and found, those spots where Lacan counters those systems" (p.33). Throughout her book, MacCannell is attentive to the social ties among human beings, as well as the ways in which Lacan makes it possible to overcome the power of signifying systems in order to reassert the social in our lives.

MacCannell divides the book into two parts in order to present her argument that Lacan is more attuned to the anti-cultural Imaginary than the culturally powered Symbolic register. In Part One, chapters 2 through 5, MacCannell discusses Lacan's concept of the word (language) in relation to sexuality, gender, civilization (culture), and, finally, "the value of metaphor" in the cultural unconscious. According to MacCannell, "The question Lacan raises is: Must the inter-human operate under the sign of sexuality? Is sexuality a universal moral law, or merely an arrangement?" (p. 42). The answers, she suggests, are no, no, and yes. No, sexuality does not have to underlie the inter-human; no, it is not a universal law; yes, it can be taken as merely an arrangement. As the latter, it is an arrangement under the law of the word in

our culture. The word-as gift or promise-is that which displaces real sexuality (which is only possible, perhaps, between the infant and the mother) into a culturally determined domain where gender is also defined or at least delimited. Sexuality, therefore, is displaced into a domain of signifiers, and consequently is turned over to a medium apart from the body itself, and participates in an economy of exchange. "What Lacan does is to take the model of the word as that which is 'exchanged' between two speaking beings and show how the forms of what would appear to be a simple 'exchange of signals between two centres' is what determines and shapes their (sexual/social) tie: exchanged, the word is *given*. And it is only in the form of a gift, a deposit, or a promise that the word is 'received'! What is significant, therefore, in the form of the exchange is that what is given is not given only (or even) to the other: it is given to whatever it is that 'guarantees,' validates or permits the exchange to occur at all. The significance of the gift is that, ultimately, it can only be given to this medium-to 'civilisation,' to the law, to God-and not to the other" (pp. 42-43).

The heart of MacCannell's book is its chapter on metaphor. Here (chapter 5), MacCannell argues that the Symbolic, Culture, the Paternal Signifier are all rooted in metaphorical thinking or the structure of metaphor. In a sense, metaphor is simply the word writ as a figure, for the word in language stands for (or stands in for) something or takes the place of something else-but it is not that thing. Metaphor, similarly, depends on the structure: A is (or stands for) B. The problem with both the word and metaphor, for MacCannell, is that the original A is displaced, covered over, disappears, but it is this A-thing (the body, probably, but also the mother) that MacCannell values. Her claim is that were it not for the metaphorization of culture, there would be no "universal" genderfication, no dominance of the paternal (masculine), no flight of civilization into the airy thinness of the ideal, the abstract, the non-phenomenological. Nor would there be economy or sexuality as we know it or the register of the Symbolic as Lacan explains it. Arguing along post-structuralist lines here MacCannell writes: "The metaphoric mode dominates culture, repressing the metonymic. But the repressed may return. The 'other' possible scene for being human, the combinatory mode in which self might be 'with' the other, haunts culturally organised man, is given voice in utopian thinking (Benjamin's proletariat as the unconscious of society, dreaming society before it 'was organised into classes'); in dreams of revolution (Stendhal's *Love*, in which a permanent state of revolution is the only

political order-which is to say disorder-that would promote a real relation between the sexes), and in Lacan, resistance to the moral order" (p. 91).

It is clear enough that *Figuring Lacan* is meant to be a radical book, and as such it is perhaps a product of 1960s thinking, certainly a product of a kind of Romanticism. MacCannell argues that Lacan is ultimately not on the side of culture, metaphor, or the paternal, but on that of nature, metonymy, the maternal. One may see this alignment in Part Two: "Splitting the Atom: The New Order." There, in chapter 6, MacCannell mounts her argument against the necessity of the hegemony of the cultural Symbolic, and in chapter 7, she concludes a discussion of Lacan's "little letter" (*le petit a*) in relation to demand and desire by suggesting how (through Lacan) one might reframe "the ideology of love beyond the Law" (p. 172). The ideology that one must see underlying MacCannell's view of Lacan is thus essentially romantic, though it would be Wordsworthian rather than Coleridgean, one suspects. MacCannell-like Kristeva-sees Lacan as an advocate of a return to the mother, a move that would totally invert the current system of culture and the Symbolic as Lacan describes it. The net effect of MacCannell's reversal would be no more than to turn Lacan's Schema L upside down. That is, instead of having the Symbolic running along the base of the schema, MacCannell (or MacCannell's Lacan) would have the line between the I and the (m)other running along the base. MacCannell does not put it this way herself, but one might suggest it in her stead. In this new order, the maternal will be the locus or guarantor of value, not the paternal, and in this new order, the Imaginary, not the Symbolic, will be the regnant domain within language and human relationships. In this respect, all that may well be

involved here is the return of the myth of the great mother, a myth more compatible with “natural” civilizations than with the “polis” of the western world.

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**Shoshana Felman. *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight: Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.**

Shoshana Felman's *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight* is

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largely a reprinting of revised essays that Lacanians will probably have seen previously. As Felman carefully notes, apart from various revisions, the only really new material in the book appears in the brief chapter 1 and in the final chapter (“Beyond Oedipus: The Specimen Story of Psychoanalysis”), half of which (about 30 pages) is new. The fact that so much of it is previously published might suggest that the book serves no new purpose. But such is not the case, for Felman’s “adventure of insight” in working with Lacan comes through here as a clear and useful theme of the book, though not in the uncollected essays. Felman’s “adventure” parallels the Oedipus story in psychoanalysis, for the story of her encountering Lacan is likewise the specimen story of most Lacanians. Like Felman, many of us have come to Lacan from disciplines other than psychoanalysis, often from paradigms far from psychoanalytic theory, and almost never at first from within the context of the analysis and whether with a Freudian or a Lacanian analyst. For many of us, as for Felman, the encounter with Lacan indeed has been an adventure into *terra incognita*.

Felman suggests that her primary assumption regarding Lacan is that he offers a new way of reading, “a theory of reading that opens up into a rereading of the world as well as into a rereading of psychoanalysis itself” (p. 9). She demonstrates her thesis in chapter 1, “Renewing the Practice of Reading, or Freud’s Unprecedented Lesson,” and chapter 2, “The Case of Poe: Applications/ Implications of Psychoanalysis.” In the first chapter, Felman suggests that what Lacan has added to Freud’s theory of reading the unconscious is this: that “the activity of reading is not just the analyst’s, it is also the analyst’s: interpreting is what takes place **on both sides** of the analytic situation” (p. 21). In the second chapter, Felman addresses in more detail what it is that Lacan brings to analysis (literary, in this case, since the focus is on Poe’s “Purloined Letter”). She assesses such Freudian interpretations as Joseph Wood Krutch’s and Marie Bonaparte’s, as well as Lacan’s own. She focuses on the repetition compulsion as it manifests itself in Poe’s tale, but also on the way it is treated by Bonaparte, for example, and Lacan. While Bonaparte emphasizes the concept of identity in repetition, Lacan emphasizes difference. “For Lacan, what is repeated in the text is not the content of a fantasy but the symbolic displacement of a signifier through the insistence of a signifying chain; repetition is not of sameness but of **difference**, not of independent terms or of analogous themes but of a structure of differential interrelationships, in **which what returns is always other**” (p. 43). But more

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than this, says Felman, the second repetitive scene in Poe’s tale becomes important for Lacan because, as a scene of the repetition of the same with a crucial, analytic difference, it is an allegory of analysis itself.

Repetition and difference thus become Felman’s themes in chapter 3, “What Difference Does Psychoanalysis Make? or The Originality of Freud.” Despite the title, the chapter is devoted to Lacan’s originality as much as to Freud’s. “Simply put, the originality of Lacan lies in his radical understanding of the radicality of Freud’s discovery, and in his eagerness to carry the consequences of this discovery to their logical limits. In so doing, Lacan assesses and thinks out not just the significance of psychoanalysis but, specifically, the significance of the difference that it makes, of the difference it has introduced into Western culture. Lacan’s originality, in other words, lies in his uncompromising inquiry into the originality of psychoanalysis” (p.53). But Lacan’s originality is also related to repetition. Lacan insists on a return to Freud, who stands in relation to Lacan as the origin of a trauma stands to its expression in a symptom. Lacan’s relation to Freud is thus defined in terms of *Nachträglichkeit* “Freud’s discovery of the unconscious can thus itself be looked at as a sort of primal scene, a cultural trauma, whose meaning-or originality in cultural history-comes to light only through Lacan’s significantly transference, symptomatic repetition” (p. 54). As to the difference that psychoanalysis makes, Felman suggests that it lies in its focus on a new center of knowledge-the subject, rather than the object. Freud thus introduced a “new and unprecedented **mode of reflexivity**,” one that stresses asymmetry rather than symmetry between the “self departed from and the self returned to” (p. 60). But to Freud, Lacan added a further twist; where Freud focuses on the “revolutionized status of the center and of centrality,” Lacan stresses the “revolutionized conception of the very moment of revolving. Freud therefore emphasizes the revolutionized observed/the resulting revolutionized image of the human mind; Lacan brings out the implication of the revolutionized **scientific status of the observer**” (p. 65). Thus the orbit of “knowledge,” for Lacan, becomes not circular, but elliptical, Felman suggests, a shift that, appropriately, reflects the difference between a Copernicus and a Kepler.

Repetition and difference are also the themes of the book’s **fifth**, and most searching, chapter-“Beyond Oedipus: The Specimen Story of Psychoanalysis.” The chapter constitutes more than a third of the entire book, as well as virtually all the new material in it. By itself it may

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be worth the book’s price. Felman begins with the concept of “the key narrative,” the story that, like the tale of Oedipus for Freud, validates both a theory and a practice. For Felman, however, the Oedipus story, like the relation of Copernicus to Kepler, is also a key to Lacan’s relation to Freud. “I would suggest,” writes Felman, “that an exploration . . . of the way in which the Oedipus mythic reference holds the key to a Lacanian psychoanalytic understanding . . . may hold the key in turn to the crux of Lacan’s innovative insight into what Freud discovered and, consequently, into what psychoanalysis is all about” (p. 102). The crux of Felman’s analysis here lies in her assessment of the difference between two pairs of works: *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, on the one hand, and Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, on the other. The way beyond Oedipus, as Felman explains it, lies in the story of Oedipus, blind and dying, in exile at Colonus. At Colonus, Oedipus faces death and at last becomes the Other-or assumes the sought-after Other in himself. Then Felman, in her story, takes each protagonist-Oedipus, Freud, and Lacan-through the meaning of Colonus, and in the end she takes psychoanalysis through Colonus, too. As Lacan talks about *Oedipus at Colonus*, she says, “he is telling and retelling not just Freud’s, and his own, psychoanalytic story but the very story of

psychoanalysis, seen from Colonus: the story of Freud's going beyond Freud, of Oedipus' going beyond Oedipus, the story of psychoanalysis' inherent, radical, and destined self-expropriation" (p. 148). Beyond the King lies Colonus; beyond Colonus lies death, the Other, and the always unknowable end.

Perhaps because Felman sometimes strains at the paradoxes inherent in her thesis (which is the paradox of repetition itself, since repetition depends on both the same and the different), the concluding essay is challenging and intricately instructive. It is like Felman's whole book. Though one may become annoyed by the constant sense of reflexive one-upmanship in it, the book (despite frequent typographical errors and having no index) rewards careful reading.

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**Barnaby B. Barratt. *Psychic Reality and Psychoanalytic Knowing.***

**Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press, 1984.**

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Barratt's interest is in the revolutionary quality of Freud's discovery of the repressed unconscious for the notion of the subject and for the notion of science. He argues that Freud's work has been systematically adulterated, much of Freud's own writing after 1914 and most of the work of his "successors" being a retreat from the radical implications of the initial methodological discovery. Barratt offers a far-reaching exposition of the epistemological consequences of this discovery that consciousness is both polysemous and contradictory. Sequentially, he discusses subjectivistic and objectivistic epistemologies, as well as hermeneutic ontology, by studies of Freudian discourse in relation to such philosophers as Descartes, Kant, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer. He then offers some quite trenchant criticisms of attempts to integrate Freud's discoveries with these preFreudian traditions. Here, ego psychology, self psychology, objectrelations, and Lacanism come under attack. The section on Lacan is both appreciative and critical, but depends upon a reading of Lacan that perhaps overemphasizes the Heideggerian influence. Barratt's book is mainly critique, although the final sections offer the beginnings of a version of psychoanalytic discourse that draws heavily upon Adorno's last writings and connects with certain contemporary deconstructionist researches.

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**George F. Drinka, M.D. *The Birth of Neurosis: Myth, Malady and the Victorians.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.**

Dr. Drinka places the genesis of the modern concept of neurosis in the beginnings of the eighteenth century (with the work of Cheyne, Whytt, and Cullen). His extensive research covers Western Europe (Germany, France and England), and the United States. Since Drinka has chosen to end his book with Freud's celebrated case-history of the Wolf Man, the time span really covers the pre-history of the psychoanalytic movement. The centerpiece of the work is Drinka's study of Charcot and a detailed description of the polemic between Charcot's disciples and the followers of Bernheim. Of particular interest to contemporary students of hysteria is Drinka's interpretation and evaluation of *la grande hysterie* in La Salpêtrière, a phenomenon which by all accounts disappeared towards the end of the century. Drinka argues convincingly

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that Charcot's patients learned to produce their dramatic attacks from the epileptics with whom they were housed, and from each other, and continued to perform from a conscious or unconscious desire to please the Master. In order to arrange and explain the enormous quantity of material he has collected, Drinka makes use of the concept of myth understood as non-scientific explanations which are cultural in origin: i.e., prejudices and superstitions which are more or less stable and unchanging, although they may take on the particular coloring of an historical moment.

Drinka plays with the idea of myth, creating his own representations (the Angelic Invalid, the Zeus myth), or borrows from Rousseau and Lombroso to produce a Noble Savage myth or a Born Criminal myth. While this interpretive strategy works to emphasize the continuity and strength, and to a lesser degree, the adaptability of Victorian prejudices and also demonstrates clearly that the scientific community did not work in a ratified atmosphere uncontaminated by folklore, the concept of myth as used by Drinka has its drawbacks. At the same time, it is necessary to point out the strengths of this book: its breadth and solidity of research, as well as the felicitous style in which it is written. Because of Drinka's training as a psychiatrist, he places medical ideas not only in the context of what was known in the nineteenth century, but also in the context of contemporary medical knowledge. In essence, Drinka translates the nineteenth century medical text into twentieth century terminology. Finally, the bibliography is an invaluable tool for the student interested in the historical background of the concept of mental illness.

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