

Book Reviews:

Stavrakakis, Yannis. *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2007.
Reviewed by Lawrence Loiseau

Yannis Stavrakakis's *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, Politics* provides an engaging and instructive mapping of the major ideas, debates and personalities that have informed the fascinating "theoretico-political horizon" of what Stavrakakis fittingly names "the Lacanian Left" (5). At the heart of this horizon is the heightened realization of the increased relevance and utility of Lacan's work to political theory, especially for the objectives and aims of much of the left-wing. In part, this emergence should not be too surprising: Lacan himself showed considerable interest in Marx's thinking after venturing to receive Louis Althusser's students into his 1964 Seminar, even while he managed to reformulate many of Marx's ideas. With that said, there have also been considerable intellectual forays that have related Marxist theory to Psychoanalysis generally, beginning with mid-20th Century theoreticians such as Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Althusser. Still, as Stavrakakis notes in the introduction to *The Lacanian Left*, it is important to realize that recent efforts to integrate Lacan into this history are not based on Lacan's personal politics or biography; instead, they are based on the still-growing articulation between left-wing political analysis and Lacanian theory that has gained particular momentum in England and North America over the last three decades, most notably with the release of Slavoj Žižek's first English language book, his 1989 *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso) (3). Naturally, the historical emergence of this merging of Lacan and left-wing politics should not overshadow Lacan's already well-recorded presence in America prior to 1989, whose own name has already been notably represented by Lacanian scholars such as Ellie Ragland with her *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (1984, University of Ill. Press) and Bice Benvenuto's and Roger Kennedy's *The Works of Jacques Lacan: An Introduction* (1986, St. Martin's

Press); nor does such a movement pertain to Lacan's already well-known presence within numerous countries throughout the non-English speaking world. In fact, when counted altogether, such inroads made by Lacan on this side of the Atlantic are worthy of special approbation in light of North America's and England's considerable and ongoing resistance to continental discourse, the unfortunate result being that Lacan, like many other innovative 20th Century thinkers, is often offhandedly dismissed for no other reason than the fact that such critics seem unable to understand him. Notwithstanding, in light of the fact that, as Stavrakakis states, "Lacan lacked any noticeable leftist leanings... beyond a certain (anti-utopian) radicalism", it is no surprise that Stavrakakis remains careful to emphasize that there is no pre-existing unity behind the dialogues presented (1). The theorists Stavrakakis focuses on in *The Lacanian Left* are strikingly diverse and enter into this connection at various vantage points: many are opposed to each other on a number of issues, whether such issues concern points of Lacanian theory, the question of Left-wing praxis generally or disagreements of interpretation over contemporary political affairs. In fact, the outlining of such express disagreements is one of the highlights of Stavrakakis's ambitious and candid work. The clearest example of this is the debate over the status and relevance of democracy in contemporary left-wing politics, a central theme in *The Lacanian Left*. Seemingly reflective of the lack of solidarity plaguing today's Left as a whole, this particular battle line (over Lacan) is most starkly drawn between Laclau and Žižek, with the former sustaining the call for radical democracy and the latter markedly critical of calls to democracy *à propos* of today's ideological context.

While limiting himself to developments of the last thirty years (he does not treat Althusser, for example), Stavrakakis's seminal exploration of this distinctive field is inaugurated by a lengthy but critical "Introduction", followed by two equally condensed Units. The "Introduction" lays out Stavrakakis's entry point into the milieu and sets forth the epistemological and theoretical orientation of the Lacanian Left. The most significant of these, and perhaps the most useful navigational device for Lacanian readers, is Stavrakakis's placement of

Lacanian thinkers within a spectrum of negative to positive. Here, Stavrakakis registers how each theorist can be situated in relation to the all-important yet difficult register of the real. Not surprisingly, Stavrakakis also treads carefully here: on the one hand, he fully acknowledges the “radical incommensurability [of the real] with our symbolic constructs” and is keenly aware of the real’s necessary resistance to any obvious understanding (or, if not understanding as such, certainly representation), such as resistance, the hallmark of the real in Lacanian theory (9). At the same time, Stavrakakis also cites Lacan’s own concession that theorization of the real is possible: if “the real is defined as that which resists symbolisation, this is because we can indeed experience the failure of symbolisation in the first place” (8). Accordingly, he concedes Žižek’s conclusion that, “the only ethical stance is to assume fully the impossible task of symbolizing the real, *inclusive of its necessary failure*” (9). So it is that we must attempt to symbolize or positivize the real, “to enact a positive encircling of the real” despite our inevitable failure of this (10). On the other hand, Stavrakakis also warns that “this should not be a fantasmatic symbolization attempting to mortify the real of experience and to eliminate once and for all its structural causality” (9). Ultimately, Stavrakakis’s framework sheds considerable light on how critics might categorize Lacanian thinkers of the leftist persuasion, marking where they stand in relation to the real. Suffice it to conclude that Stavrakakis’s precaution certainly acquires a more sobering significance when one recalls that such concerns are not simply theoretical in nature but come with serious political intent.

With such theoretical fortitude at his side, Stavrakakis proceeds to Unit One, entitled “Dialectics of Disavowal”, to propose the related claim that much of today’s Lacanian Left is guilty of disavowing significant aspects of Lacanian theory. Such thinkers have “typically stressed only one of the dimensions involved [the positive], downgrading the other [the negative]” in Lacan’s writings (19). On the one hand, Žižek and Badiou tend more to positivize aspects of Lacanian thinking, while disavowing much of its negative dimension; on the other hand, Laclau, despite being considerably more favorable to the negative aspect of Lacan’s thought, nevertheless fails

to perceive – at least in Stavrakakis’s view -- the benefit in positivising Lacanian notions like *jouissance* within political analysis. Following his outline, Stavrakakis commences each of three chapters in the unit by focusing on a central figure in the discipline and situating them within his evolving spectrum. Beginning with the somewhat idiosyncratic Cornelius Castoriadis, the chapter proceeds to long-time political theorist Ernesto Laclau and, finally, in chapter three, ends with the genre’s most well-known critic, Slavoj Žižek. Importantly, while Stavrakakis lets it be known that he differs most sharply from Žižek, and thus subjects his work to considerable criticism in the *The Lacanian Left*, Stavrakakis nevertheless recognizes Žižek’s particular contribution in the field. Indeed, to supplement the chapter on Žižek, Stavrakakis adds a particularly illuminating excursus on the work of Alain Badiou, a chapter that not only offers fitting praise for Badiou, but helpfully clarifies Stavrakakis’s own argument against Žižek. To this end, it is odd that Badiou is not afforded his own chapter in the book.

Responding to perceived inadequacies in both post-structuralist and traditional thinking due to “oversimplified understanding[s] of signification,” the second unit, entitled “Dialectic of Enjoyment,” sets out to show how Lacanian thinking is uniquely situated to uncover the positive, affective dimensions underlying signification (166). Divided into five chapters, the second unit focuses on various contemporary issues and themes that have occupied left-wing political critique as a whole. At this point, Stavrakakis sets out to reveal how Lacanian understandings of affectivity, best figured under his notion of *jouissance*, is relevant to the political stage. Elaborating on the meaning, and the critical possibility of the use of *jouissance* in Lacanian-inspired political analyses in Chapter Four “From Symbolic Power to *Jouissance*”, Stavrakakis then proceeds to treat the modern Nation in a Chapter Five, entitled “Enjoying the Nation: A Success Story”, which is followed by a theorization of the lackluster appeal of European identity in Chapter Six “Lack of Passion: European Identity Revisited”. In the final two chapters, Stavrakakis concludes with a meditation of broader topics, such as consumerism in the last fifty years in “The Consumerist ‘Politics of *Jouissance*’ and the Fantasy

of Advertising” in Chapter Seven and in “Democracy in Post-Democratic Times.” In his final chapter in *The Lacanian Left*, he tentatively explores in greater depth the precarious status of democracy in contemporary politics.

To be sure, Stavrakakis does not merely proffer a summary of the writings of other critics. *The Lacanian Left* is itself a political statement, not only within Leftist thought, but within intellectually-inclined political criticism generally. *The Lacanian Left*’s most fundamental contention is that critics generally must go beyond the strict analysis of discourse in the political field; rather, Stavrakakis’s appeal is that theorists must “draw the political implications of...the real, in its different modalities”, thus taking more seriously Lacan’s later theoretical developments (5). Indeed, they must not only pay attention to how Lacan describes the real, but, more importantly, disclose the underlying presence of *jouissance* in broader political formations and identifications. That is, taking Lacanian thought further out of the analyst’s office and the classrooms of literary theory, Stavrakakis asserts that political critics must begin to consider how political ideologies and sites of ideological production can be seen as cultivating, through modes of signification, bonds of enjoyment within the subjects they dominate. In contrast to post-structuralist arguments, therefore, which are typically content to deconstruct the language of power, Stavrakakis astutely perceives the *force* or affectivity resident beneath ideological discourse. At the same time, while recognizing the importance of *jouissance* in political analysis itself is not strictly original with Stavrakakis as such, his situating of it within his own summary of left-wing Lacanian analyses, and his detailed focus on how he articulates *jouissance* in specific issues (such as personal identification within the European Union), are both productive and novel. One lively example of Stavrakakis’s own voice entering into the fray can be found in Chapter Four, where he weighs heavily into the question of how Lacan might fit into longstanding debates regarding the relationship of violence to left-wing and revolutionary politics. Resolutely supporting Laclau’s articulation of radical democracy against any possible considerations of a revolutionary dialogue, Stavrakakis opposes the use of vio-

lence in political struggle, stressing later in Chapter Five how such narratives to revolution themselves dangerously traffic in the fantasy of complete *jouissance*, serving only to lure subjects into ideological fantasies that equally sustain them in the circuits of capitalist discourse. Naturally, for those who might be interested in delving further into this debate, and reading further commentary on *The Lacanian Left*, Žižek's own spirited response can be found at www.lacan.com/zizliberal.com. Regardless of the details of such longstanding debates (namely, the role of violence in political activism), Stavrakakis meets both goals admirably in *The Lacanian Left*, providing a much needed coalescing and summary of the Lacanian Left as well as sustaining his own distinctive voice within it.

Grigg, Russell. *Lacan, Language and Philosophy*. SUNY Press, Albany, NY, 2008. 199 pp., Hardcover Edition \$65.00 ISBN: 978I-0-7914-7345-0. Reviewed by Benjamin Kozicki

Russell Grigg's *Lacan, Language and Philosophy* brings together a collection of articles which have been previously published in other sources (most of which have either gone out of print or are not easily obtained), some of which have been updated while others have been significantly revised for this printing. Broken into two parts, the first part of the book (entitled "Psychosis, Neurosis and the Name-of-the-Father") is based on a discussion of the similarities, but also elucidates differences between Freud and Lacan; differences which may be subtle, but which bear great significance in the formation and development of Lacan's own theory of psychoanalysis. In addition to elaborating the references to Freud's work, Grigg also discusses other influences and references of Lacan's such as Melanie Klein, Roman Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and others.

The first three chapters serve to provide a concept of Lacanian theory that at once considers the scope and range of Lacan's career. Grigg's style and organization is straightforward enough so that the text is accessible to someone who might know little or nothing about Lacan, yet at the same time

informative enough so as to be beneficial to those familiar with Lacan; Grigg tracks the concepts he discusses throughout the scope of Lacan's work in order to highlight the evolution and nuance of Lacan's teaching from volume to volume of his *oeuvre*. These chapters focus on the role of the father in psychoanalytic theory; indeed, Grigg begins with a chapter on foreclosure. Here he focuses on the structure of psychosis and explains how Lacan's understanding of foreclosure not only shows what triggers the psychoses (in contrast to neurosis which works by repression), but also highlights a significant departure from Freud's theory. Grigg considers the case of the Wolf Man as well as Schreber's *Memoirs*, and ends the first chapter with the case of James Joyce from *Seminar XXIII*, thus providing an exploration of Lacan's theory on psychosis from his early to his later work. Grigg also introduces the distinction between the real and reality, and the paternal metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father, as well as the concepts of the letter and the symptom.

Grigg then moves on to the topics of the neuroses and identification through the function of the father in the real, symbolic, and the imaginary. By doing this, Grigg delineates the status of the father in these three registers, and further elucidates Lacan's divergence from Freud through his reading of Freud's texts. Grigg also considers the function of the superego in comparison to the ego ideal, and introduces the topic of the Oedipus Complex, which is compared in detail to other myths such as Antigone, and the primal horde father in *Totem and Taboo*. Grigg elaborates on how Lacan moves past "Freud's myth" of the Oedipus Complex, to propose the theory of the discourses. Lacan then explores the relationship and difference between the Oedipus Complex and the castration complex (or Oedipal myth and primal horde) and the resultant structures of neurosis. Grigg also broaches Lacan's understanding of the difference between science and myth, and to this end explains how Lacan conceives of psychoanalysis as being closer to science. He argues that myth, as conceived of by Lévi-Strauss, is closer to fantasy. He also stresses how Lacan draws upon the work of Lévi-Strauss and ultimately comes to critique the field of anthropology.

The fourth and fifth chapters go a step further into ex-

ploring the difference between Lacan and Freud by discussing the concept of the transference in analysis, which can feel like, but differs from, love for Freud. For Lacan transference love was love itself. Grigg also discusses how the *objet a* functions in this process. Grigg outlines the process of analysis and the roles of the ego and superego, and how Lacan's understanding of these concepts are radically different, not just from Freud's theory of the terms, but also touches on how Lacan's technique of analysis differs from other methods of analysis and therapy. Here Grigg delves deeper into the ethical and theoretical differences between psychoanalysis, ego psychology, and other "Psys," similar psycho-therapeutical and medical practices which adhere to a wholly different standard of qualification and competency in one's field. Grigg concludes this by way of a commentary on recent efforts by the French legislature to regulate psychoanalysis by considering the legal and practical ramifications of the creation of arbitrary standards. Grigg supports Jacques-Alain Miller's assertion that the application of such standards could threaten the integrity and existence of the practice of psychoanalysis in favor of methods based on a regressive knowledge that fails to appreciate the importance of Freud's "Copernican revolution."

The second part of the book, "Analyzing Philosophers: Descartes, Kant, Žižek, Badiou, and Jakobson" shifts focus to take a philosophical look at Lacan's teaching in relation to the concepts and critiques of these, and other philosophers and linguists. The chapters of this section revisit the material covered in the first section to elaborate Lacan's theory in a more philosophical context, and open up with a chapter that introduces the concepts of sexuation and the *pas-tout*, or the "not-all," (a logical construct that does not translate well from French to English) through the corollaries of Aristotelian logic, and predicate calculus. Arguing that Lacan's *pas-tout* was directly influenced by Jacques Brunschwig's theory of the "maximal particular," Grigg affirms that Lacan's method is constructivist instead of intuitionist, but that Lacan is also able to utilize the prohibitions of intuitionism in order to support his theories, thus refuting Badiou's conclusion that Lacan applies *all* of the strictures of intuitionism to the *pas-tout*. The discussion in this

chapter is central to the rest of the book, as it also explains the nuanced and logical approach that Lacan often takes, not only to Freud, but, also, to the other influences on his teaching.

The next two chapters examine how Lacan pursues the connection between Kant's moral imperative and the superego, a relation which Freud merely glosses over in his work. Grigg concludes that the paradox found in Kant's moral philosophy yields to Lacan's understanding of *jouissance*. Grigg also points out how Lacan claims that Kantian ethics was a necessary precondition for Freud's discovery and the emergence of psychoanalysis itself, and examines the relationship between desire and the moral law. Grigg returns to the structures of neurosis, hysteria, and obsession, in relation to guilt, the law and transgressions of the law – and also returns to the difference between foreclosure in psychosis and repression in neurosis – through a comparison of psychopathology and criminal behavior. In doing so Grigg comments again on the functions of the ego and begins to discuss the structure of perversion.

Following this, Grigg introduces the work of Slavoj Žižek, whom, he notes, is influenced by Lacan as well as Hegel, but who differs from Lacan in that he is more overtly philosophical and political. By returning to the myth of Antigone – which is aligned with the Oedipal myth in earlier chapters – Grigg critiques Žižek's concept of absolute freedom as perpetrated through the act of “symbolic suicide;” or an attempt to enact a radical break from the Other. Though Grigg does not expressly agree with Žižek, he notes how the latter theorizes that such a radical break has the potential that such an act would have to reconfigure the order of the symbolic itself, and in doing so discusses the death drive and the aim of analysis.

Grigg then comes back to science, and specifically the subject of science through a discussion on Descartes. Despite the fact that Lacan did not idealize science in the way that Freud did, Grigg notes that Lacan acknowledges that psychoanalysis owes its existence to modern science, and elaborates on the precarious proximity between the two disciplines through a discussion on truth and knowledge – both *savoir* and *connaissance*. Grigg explains Lacan's critique of Descartes,

and how, for Lacan, the subject of science – or the Cartesian subject based upon the *cogito* – is the modern subject who is encountered in analysis. Due to the mathematization of nature, the modern sciences reduce and eliminate the imaginary from science and knowledge. Grigg explains how Lacan maintains that science cannot articulate the subject but tries to suture over the lack – whereas psychoanalysis considers this subject to be the split subject. Here Grigg also emphasizes the difference between Freud and others in the field of psychoanalysis, such as Jung. Grigg finishes by covering the influence of linguists such as Roman Jakobson on Lacan’s theory, going to the topics of metaphor and metonymy, and discusses Lacan’s understanding of the concept in comparison to other linguists.

André Nusselder. *Interface Fantasy: A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009. 170 pp., Trade, \$18.95/£14.95 ISBN: 978-0-262-51300-5. Reviewed by Svitlana Matviyenko

The subject of André Nusselder’s *Interface Fantasy: A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology* is cyberspace. Today’s view of a cyborg that stands for a “cybernetic organism” is different from the time this notion was coined in 1960: according to some theorists of cyberculture, not being a robotic body allows one to identify oneself as a cyborg; taking a pill will do so as well. Nusselder employs this extended definition of a cyborg to offer his view of cyberspace as “the mental space of the human-computer interface that turns us into cyborgs”—cyborgs that desire. Forming a cyborg ontology with the help of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Nusselder uses such key psychoanalytical notions reworked by Lacan as “the unconscious,” and “fantasy,” as well as Lacan’s own concepts of “the Other,” “desire,” “object a,” “the symbolic,” “the imaginary,” “the real,” to discuss the specifics of a user’s interaction with a digital object on the screen. “There is no intrinsic motive for the relationship between bits and their form, hence giving desire and fantasy an important role in this interfacing with bits.” (5). Nusselder points out that “[t]he interfaces that lead us into cyberspace prove that one cannot detach technology from desire” (11), but

208

on the contrary, they prove that technology promises to be *the* medium to fulfill it. By the end of the book, Nusselder dismantles such belief propagated in our tech-age by warning us against techno-fetishism of the “perverse media’s” “staging a surplus of enjoyment” in today’s audio-visual culture of excess.

The book consists of six chapters; “The Question Concerning Technology,” “The Technologization of Human Virtuality,” “Fantasy and the Virtual Mind,” “Cyborg Space,” “Displays of the Real: Reality as an Effect,” and “Mediated Enjoyment: Enjoyed Media.” Each of them gradually interweave the concepts of psychoanalysis with the major notions of cybernetics and new media. Despite the meticulous nature of Nusselder’s discussion of psychoanalytical notions, the book is addressed to those who are interested in the discourses on new media and technology while at the same time, this book will serve those Freudian and Lacanian scholars looking towards the effects of techno-culture on the human being.

Nusselder borrows Lacan’s description of fantasy as a “screen” to argue that the computer screen functions in a cyberspace, or a “psychological space,” as a “screen of fantasy,” where the codified objects are represented and conceptualized so that a database appears to a user in an accessible form (the process is also known as interactivity). In addition to making digital objects “virtually reachable” for a user, the screen is that stage where these objects appear. Constructed or retracted by a user from virtual space, the objects are brought forward by the screen, and thus the encounter with these objects (that cause desire) is double-sided. As Lacan explains in *Seminar XI*, on the one hand, desire, of course, remains unsatisfied, on the other, the effect of temporary satisfaction of desire is created by means of reaching the aim without truly achieving the goal or satisfying the need, going around the object of desire without consuming this object. By designing an avatar, an imaginary projection of a desired “self,” or by establishing a relation with or developing affection for another remote user on-line, one reaches the aim of communication even though the goal is missed as it is always a miscommunication. It should be noted for those who have an apocalyptic vision of technology’s omnipresence today: this scenario is not limited to cyber-experienc-

es, but is also absolutely typical for real life communications and relationships. The subject is engaged in imaginary relationships in real life as much as in the virtual world. As *Interface Fantasy* shows, cyberspace simply makes things a little more obvious without actually changing their nature.

For Nusselder the computer screen performs another important function of fantasy – that of protection. Drawing on Lacan’s concept of the fantasy, *Interface Fantasy* claims that the electronic realities of cyberspace are similar to the functioning of fantasy as a medium that supports a “human reality” by staging desire and protecting the subject from the unbearable real as the limit of experience resisting symbolization. This is an irreducible reminder that lack is constitutive of the human subject. Nusselder argues that the interface fantasy on the screen does exactly the same—it protects a user from the real by allowing him or her to build their imaginary projections and establish imaginary connections with other “dwellers” of the online worlds. By functioning as a screen, as an illusion, the fantasy covers or masks the real. At the same time, reality is rooted in fantasy, because *the object a*, a semblance of being, is “unable ... to sustain itself in approaching the real” (*Seminar XX*, 95). Overall, the key figure of Lacanian topology, the Borromean knot of the orders of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic serves well Nusselder’s discussion of the interface fantasy that, unfortunately, lacks reference to the function of the symptom. The symptom ties the real, symbolic and imaginary together to determine the subjects’ unique way of experiencing *jouissance*, and therefore, fantasy.

In the chapter on cyborg space, Nusselder identifies the notion of “avatar” as a projection of the user’s fantasy on screen. He suggests that the identification with the virtual image is similar to Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage that he carefully addresses earlier in this chapter where he speaks of the formation of the ego as a “virtual unity.” Taken from Lacan’s *Seminar II*, the notion of “virtual unity” is re-contextualized within the context of media and acquires a new meaning, just like the concepts of “fantasy as screen,” and the triade of the real, imaginary, and symbolic. By this Nusselder demonstrates the openness of psychoanalysis towards techno-culture and

the psychoanalytical discourse to the discourses of media and cyberculture. Admittedly, *Interface Fantasy* is not a mere application of Lacanian theory to some realms of cyberculture, but rather a mapping of psychoanalysis' crossing points with cybernetics. Along with another book of the MIT Press' *Short Circuits* series, *Is Oedipus Online? Sitting Freud after Freud* (2005) by Jerry Aline Flieger, *Interface Fantasy* contributes to the new discourse of psychoanalytic posthumanism and calls for further research in this area.

Eidelsztein, Alfredo. *The Graph of Desire*. London: Karnac Books, 2009. 300 pp., Paperback \$32.29. ISBN 1855756102. Reviewed by John Gasperoni, Ph.D.

As an American student of Lacan, especially one who is not fluent in French, I have always faced this difficulty: with what level of assurance can I take any text translated into English as being an accurate representation of what Lacan actually said? With the *Ecrits* and other texts that Lacan produced for publication, one must take at face value the honest intention of being as transparent in translation as possible, as Bruce Fink's work claims. With other texts produced from Lacan's spoken word, such as the seminars, there always remains the question of emendation and redaction. Knowing that the texts of the *Ecrits* were based on the ongoing seminars, one tries to find those seminars as a way to read through and glean an understanding of the very dense *Ecrits*, to have a modicum of assurance that what one is understanding is at least going in the direction Lacan indicated. The *Subversion* text is one of the denser of the set, and has functioned as a Gordian knot that I have struggled to unravel for some time. Then, I received my copy of this text, and found that Eidelsztein, in a very concise and precise way, has charted a way through the knot of both the graph and the *Subversion* text.

Eidelsztein introduces the scope of his project, underlining the points he will maintain throughout this work, that Lacan was the first to systematically articulate psychoanalysis and topology, that because the symbolic determines the

imaginary and the real there is a crucial difference between listening and reading or between the signifier and the letter, that the graph of desire is the theoretical tool that gives Lacan the means by which to oppose the letter and the signifier, and that the graph of desire introduces the *objet a* as the cause of desire. He illustrates the principles of graph theory by using the problem of the bridges of Königsberg. From the basis of this demonstration, he then critiques the representation of the graph of desire, redrawing it so that it becomes a true and complete directed graph by inscribing it through a Möbius strip, making it topologically equivalent to an interior eight, a structure with a hole. This immersion of the graph into a topological surface orients the graph, transforming it into an explicative theoretical representation and a direction for praxis in the clinic. He then contrasts the difference between the two series of need-demand-desire and *jouissance*/demand/desire, first looking at how the first series leaves *jouissance* interdicted, or only being able to be said between the lines, and then how the second series allows Lacan to go beyond the biological Freud and consider the body as that which is created by the Other's inscription of *jouissance*. He then goes on to illustrate the structural difference between psychosis and neurosis as it is represented in the graph, how neurotic structures, if left to their own devices, stay trapped in the circuit of metonymy, and the pathway that metaphor opens for the institution of something different in the functioning of the subject at an unconscious level is blocked. He then elaborates how the phantasm functions as a bridge in a psychoanalytic cure to the signifier of the lack in the Other, or how the Other lacks a signifier to represent the subject in discourse. Charting the movement through the four main points of the graph, Eidelsztein demonstrates how these form a Klein group, tracing the continuous deformation from the treasure of the Other to the signifier of the lack of the Other into the demand of the Other to the signification of the Other, and how the phantasm serves a dual function. For the neurotic, it is a terminus, a way to stay trapped as a desiring subject. But in the cure, as a bridge to the lack of the Other, it can open the door to something new, to the subject as desire. His discussion then turns to the structural and functional differences between

the *objet a*, the Imaginary phallus and the Symbolic phallus, the topological differences in the holes created in the subject by these three “objects,” how these holes are not equivalent in that they can not be topologically transformed into one another, and the interlaced functions of desire and *jouissance*, and how their mutual limiting of each other works in castration.

Eidelsztein, through a close reading of the Subversion text and a careful explication of the structural function of the graph of desire in both its synchronic and diachronic dimensions links the structural Lacan of “the unconscious is structured like a language” and the optical construction of the convex mirror of Seminar I with the model of the subject as represented in the graph of desire to his consideration of the topological structure of the Borromean knot as he presents it in the seminar on Joyce. His detailed discussion of the graph illustrates both its theoretical and clinical utility and weaknesses, demonstrating how Lacan’s focus on the *objet a* and the Borromean structure advances psychoanalytic praxis. For the English-speaking student of Lacan, Eidelsztein’s work is a crucial text in furthering one’s understanding of Lacanian theory and praxis.

