



## UNSPEAKABLE SECRETS AND THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF CULTURE

*Esther Rashkin*

*Explores the radical political potential of close reading to make the case for a new and invigorated psychoanalytic cultural studies.*

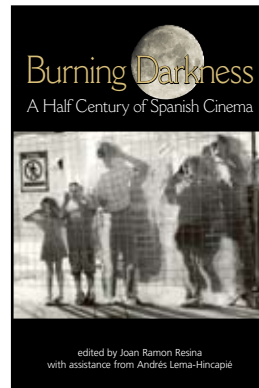
Esther Rashkin argues that psychoanalysis galvanizes, as no other discipline can, an understanding

of texts in their social, historical, and political contexts. Demonstrating that close reading can be a radical political practice, she exposes heretofore unseen ideologies concealed in works of film and literature, from *Last Tango in Paris* to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, from Barthes's *Mythologies* and Balzac's *Sarrasine* to Babette's *Feast*. Psychoanalytic concepts such as identification with the aggressor, the crypt, cryptonymy, illness of mourning, and the phantom allow Rashkin to reveal how shameful and unspeakable secrets propel the narratives she examines. In the process, she convincingly makes the case for a new practice of psychoanalytic cultural studies, a practice that fully engages with the politicized discourses—anti-Semitism, racism, colonialism, censorship—that mark a text's location in history.

**Esther Rashkin** is Professor of French and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Utah and a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice. She is the author of *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative*.

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**Joan Ramon Resina** is Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Stanford University.  
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### CONTRIBUTORS

Irení Depetris Chauvin  
Cornell U., Ithaca, NY  
Tom Conley  
Harvard U.

Robert A. Davidson  
U. of Toronto, Canada  
Josep-Anton Fernández  
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

Barry Jordan  
De Montfort U.,  
Leicester, UK  
Dominic Keown  
U. of Cambridge, UK  
Jo Labanyi  
NYU

Andrés Lema-Hincapié  
U. of CO at Denver  
Jaume Martí-Olivella  
U. of NH  
Tatjana Pavlović  
Tulane U.

Eva Woods Peiró  
Vassar Coll.  
Chris Perriam  
U. of Manchester, UK  
Àngel Quintana  
U. of Girona  
Joan Ramon Resina  
Stanford U.  
Esteve Riambau  
U. of Barcelona, Spain