

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

At a meeting at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, in the Fall of 1993, Jacques Derrida delivered a keynote lecture entitled, "For the Love of Lacan" [*Pour l'amour de Lacan*].<sup>1</sup> In the course of the lecture, Derrida explained that "the lack has no place in dissemination" (*LP*, 418). He then insisted, pausing for emphasis, that "the lack does not disseminate"—referring, clearly, to what he considers to be the architectonic function of the lack in Lacan's work, a function with which he had taken issue on several occasions.<sup>2</sup> In *Dissemination*, Derrida had already stressed what he considered to be Lacan's positing of the lack as a transcendental signifier, and how Lacan's fundamental concepts reinscribe traditional metaphysical values.

If dissemination cannot *simply* be equated with what castration *entails* or *entrains* (one should soon become [en]trained in reading this word), this is not only because of its "affirmative" character but also because, at least up to now, according to a necessity that is anything but accidental, the concept of castration has been metaphysically interpreted and arrested. *The lack, the void, the break, etc., have been given the value of a signified or, which amounts to the same, of a transcendental signifier: the self-presentation of truth (veiled/unveiled) as Logos.*<sup>3</sup>

Derrida's claims with respect to the status of the lack in Lacan's work suggest that Lacan's concepts form a system, an architectonic structure. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy develop this very point in their book *The Title of the Letter*, and insist at great lengths on the system-

aticity of Lacan's text,<sup>4</sup> a closed order which—organized around the foundational position of the lack—is said to resist dissemination.

Yet it seems to us that Lacan's text, far from being anchored in a transcendental signifier, is in fact much more open than these readings would tend to indicate; it is more open internally, if one considers the extraordinary fluidity of Lacan's discourse, the incessant transformations that it underwent along the years, the shifts in the levels of analysis, and the synchronic multiplicity of references within it; but also externally: indeed, one of the goals of this volume is to show how various theoretical orders have affected the elaboration of Lacan's theory and the extent to which its main axioms are being "disseminated," so to speak, in other discourses and registers. Lacan's very style seems to defy the structure of a system. There is in his writing a kind of subversive quality that would seem to exceed and resist any enclosure, whether political, academic, or philosophical. Indeed, it was Derrida himself who emphasized this, explaining in his paper "For the Love of Lacan" that he was glad to be involved in a conference which opposed the orthodoxy of the French academic discourse that has excluded Lacan from its canon. Derrida understood this homage to Lacan to be a sort of "cultural resistance" to a neoconformist, normalized, and even sanitized discourse that has attempted to forget Lacan (*LP*, 402). Has this exclusion from the Academy been a second "excommunication" of Lacan, after the first from psychiatry? Although Derrida challenges the metaphysical strains of Lacan's discourse, he then nonetheless recognizes its displacing effects, and the value of an interrogation which is itself a cultural resistance to that which—whether a theoretical orthodoxy or a parochialism—would prevent the dissemination of Lacan, or would attempt to prevent dissemination itself.

This "textual dissemination" of Lacan's text—the way in which it is open to other texts and operates from and within such a multiplicity—is indeed hard to miss. One cannot fail to note the remarkable extent to which Lacan's text has, in its very inception, been formed by a wide range of thinkers and disciplines. While Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy stress the closure of the Lacanian system, they recognize as well that Lacan's text was constructed from a series of "borrowings," "diversions," and "appropriations" from such varied theoretical orders as linguistics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen goes as far as to call Lacan a "prodigious assimilator,"

open to every influence, quick to grasp resemblances and analogies from among the most diverse fields.<sup>6</sup> He writes, for example:

[Lacan] made neighbors of Hegel, Heidegger, and Freud, read Kant "with" Sade, formulated human sexuality in terms of logico-mathematical paradoxes, assembled pell-mell Frege and the rudimentary inscriptions of the Mas d'Azil, Joyce and Borromean knots, St. Augustine and Saussure. (*AM*, 3)

Lacan's text, from the outset, has been woven from a plurality of discourses, and it has retained this multiplicity within it. When reading Lacan, one has the clear impression of being exposed to several voices, at once distinct and merged. In the light of such an irreducible multiplicity internal to Lacan's text—a multiplicity that this volume hopes to outline—it would be difficult to maintain that the concepts or the system that they allegedly form would not be subject to dissemination.

The essays selected for *Disseminating Lacan* exhibit a threefold discursive movement. First, they bring to light the way in which Lacan's text has been formed, as we have noted, from diverse "borrowings," revealing heretofore neglected determining influences on Lacan's thought. Second, they trace how Lacan's discourse, in turn, has engaged, affected, and transformed other discourses. Third, they suggest some possible critical readings of Lacan from various perspectives and concerns, whether epistemological or philosophical. These critiques, in pointing out certain limits of Lacan's undeniable contribution to psychoanalysis and to the intellectual world, would enrich and advance Lacanian discourse.

Thus, one of this volume's distinguishing features is its resolutely interdisciplinary perspective. Our text brings together the diverse research efforts which have remained, until now, isolated in their respective subject-matter areas. We seek to exhibit the extent to which Lacan's discourse has informed a range of theoretical orders well beyond the bounds of the therapeutic discipline of psychoanalysis, including philosophy, science, and aesthetics. The articles treat, for example, of Lacan's problematic of the subject, a question which is usually located in philosophical discourse; they bear as well on the status of science in general, and on the meaning of science for psychoanalysis in particular, with respect to Lacan's formalization of his the-

ory and practice; finally, they reflect the extent to which Lacan's privileging of the phallus—the paternal metaphor—for example, has generated a discourse with respect to issues of gender and sexuality.

*Disseminating Lacan* brings four prominent French Lacanian psychoanalysts to English language readers: Juan-David Nasio, Joël Dor, Moustapha Safouan, and Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen. Two of them, Drs. Juan-David Nasio and Joël Dor, appear here in English for the first time. Dr. Moustapha Safouan and Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, while very much French thinkers, have already reached a substantial international readership.

Additionally, this volume presents works by philosophers who are recognized leading commentators on Lacan's work, such as William Richardson, John Muller, Wilfried Ver Eecke and Richard Boothby, and scholars who work on contemporary continental philosophy in the United States, such as Babette Babich, Debra Bergoffen, and James Phillips.

Finally, *Disseminating Lacan* introduces emerging voices in Lacanian scholarship, including Thomas Brockelman, Stephen Michelman, and Cora Monroe.

## Lacan and Philosophy

*Juan-David Nasio*

*Babette Babich*

*James Phillips*

Lacan, as has been often noted, has deep roots in philosophy. His text appropriates philosophical themes either critically or generously at every turn. As early as the famous mirror stage address, Lacan engaged the Cartesian tradition, and opposed “any philosophy directly issuing from the Cogito.” Dr. Juan-David Nasio's essay takes up that issue in “The Concept of the Subject of the Unconscious,” where he straddles the divide between philosophy and psychoanalysis. More broadly, Lacan's relation to philosophy has been emphasized in terms of his intersection with Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Kojève, Sartre, among others. A remarkable absence among Lacan's philosophical “interlocutors” has been Nietzsche. Babette Babich fills this lacuna

with her paper, entitled "The Order of the Real: Nietzsche and Lacan." As Lacan stated that he opposed any philosophy stemming from the Cogito, so did he consistently oppose any psychoanalysis stemming from the "primacy of perception." Dr. James Phillips, clinical professor of psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine, and a practicing psychiatrist, provides a comprehensive historical account of Lacan's complex relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, attempting to delimit the scope of Lacan's project in its philosophical significance.

Lacanian psychoanalyst Juan-David Nasio's contribution to *Disseminating Lacan* was first delivered May 15 1979, at the request of Lacan, as an intervention in his Seminar. Dr. Nasio has been recognized as one of the leading Lacanian theorists and practitioners working in Paris today. Dr. Nasio's "The Concept of the Subject of the Unconscious" considers the relation between the subject and unconscious knowledge, logic, and castration.

Nasio credits Lacan with a crucial philosophical discovery, namely his finding that the subject is fundamentally barred from its knowledge due to the fact that the signifier is an incomprehensible representation (*DL*, 25). Accordingly, Nasio maps out the position of the Other in a subject that *does not know* what it is saying. Nasio writes, in this regard, of the subject's paradoxical caesura: "We are the subject of the act, and paradoxically, in this act, we disappear. We are and we are not the subject of the act" (*DL*, 27). For Nasio, the subject speaks only to vanish, an event that takes place in the Other.

Further, Nasio appropriates Lacan's "topology" and "logic" in order to speak of a subject which is divided and which represents a "lack-support" underlying the entire signifying chain. He appropriates the Riemann surface in order to bring out the layered and fading character of the subject. Nasio emphasizes that it is in this respect that the subject is said to be castrated, and castration is reinterpreted as the separation of the subject from its meaning. Nasio concludes that Lacan does not ultimately—with such references to the subject of the unconscious—turn the subject into a *substratum*, precisely because Lacan does not identify the subject with what is represented (*DL*, 33).

Babette Babich engages Lacan's problematic of the real with her essay entitled, "The Order of the Real: Nietzsche and Lacan." Following her recent book, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science*, Babich under-

takes a "conceptual comparison of Nietzsche's "Chaos/nature" ("the raw face of existence that structures human life") with Lacan's Real ("what we miss, an encounter with chance, . . . the inconceivable, an originary insufficiency") (*DL*, 46-7). Babich asserts that psychoanalysis is primarily oriented toward the real as such. She claims that for Lacan—as well as for Nietzsche—the real points to a concept of nature in which causal explanations no longer hold. The real then designates the gap between causes and effects.

What then of truth? This would be, after all, the proper concern of philosophy, and Babich searches for a truth—between Nietzsche and Lacan—that "speaks *between* philosophy and psychoanalysis" (*DL*, 53). For Babich, the real represents such a truth, one that insists even in denial: an illusory truth, a truth as illusion. For Babich, Lacan and Nietzsche converge on such a truth. The only possibility for truth resides in an art which is aware of itself as art. Babich sees such a possibility in the confrontation of the subject with the signifier. The truth of the subject is then both the *real* and the *eternal return*. "From a Lacanian perspective," Babich asserts, "Nietzsche's doctrine of the Eternal return can be interpreted as an approach to finitude (the Real)" (*DL*, 64).

While Babette Babich engages the relation between Lacan and Nietzsche on the question of the real, Dr. James Phillips's essay, "Lacan and Merleau-Ponty: The Confrontation of Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology," turns to Lacan's relation to the phenomenological tradition of perception. Dr. Phillips elaborates the general differences that separate psychoanalysis and phenomenology and the particular differences that separate Lacan and Merleau-Ponty. He seeks to trace out Merleau-Ponty's notion that the unconscious can be accounted for on the basis of perceptual ambiguities, on the one hand, and Lacan's rejections of such phenomenological treatments of the unconscious, on the other. Dr. Phillips's essay chronicles the irreducible rift between these two thinkers, a rift only to be resolved with Merleau-Ponty's death. With this rift, he develops his notion of Lacan as explicitly non- or antiphenomenological, as he locates Lacan's relation to philosophy.

Dr. Phillips chronicles a number of encounters between Lacan and Merleau-Ponty, including that of February 1957, when Lacan presented a paper to the Société Française de Philosophie entitled "Psychoanalysis and its Teaching," as well as at Henry Ey's annual

colloquium at Bonneval: encounters in which Merleau-Ponty seemed to resist the primacy that Lacan accorded to language (*DL*, 85). Phillips reports as well on the posthumous debate between Lacan and Merleau-Ponty, with particular attention to Lacan's Memorial tribute to Merleau-Ponty. Phillips traces Lacan's critique that Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the primacy of perception made psychoanalytic experience inaccessible to him (*DL*, 89).

In spite of the carefully articulated differences between the two thinkers, Phillips also gives insightful attention to the *shared* grounds of phenomenology and psychoanalysis, principally between the Lacanian unconscious and the *invisible* as thematized in Merleau-Ponty's working notes in *The Visible and the Invisible*. Phillips helps us to situate Lacan and psychoanalysis in the midst of its contemporary philosophical milieu.

## Lacan and Science

*Joël Dor*

*Stephen Michelman*

*Judith Feher Gurewich*

If psychoanalysis, as Lacan thematizes it, disrupts the order of causality, as was pointed out in the preceding section, then the status of its scientificity is thrown into question. How can this be reconciled with Lacan's claim as to the formalization of his practice so that psychoanalysis could become a science?<sup>8</sup> Many have read his mathemes, borromean knots, and algorithms to be evidence of this formalization of psychoanalysis in the service of scientificity. The debate that has developed with respect to Lacan's scientificity, then, must take account of these figures. Joël Dor's essay, "The Epistemological Status of Lacan's Mathematical Paradigms," critically considers Lacan's use of mathematical figures. The additional two articles in this section, however, move beyond a debate with respect to "Lacan's topology" to consider his relation to other sciences, particularly *social sciences*, with Durkheim in the case of Stephen Michelman's article, and Durkheim, Weber, Mead, and Marx, in the case of Judith Feher Gurewich's article.

French psychoanalyst and Joël Dor has authored numerous definitive works on Lacan, including the two volumes of *Introduction à la*

lecture de Lacan, as well as the two volumes of *L'a-scientificité de la psychanalyse*. His essay, "The Epistemological Status of Lacan's Mathematical Paradigms," engages Lacan's well-known and very prominent use of "mathematical paradigms," and inquires into the epistemological status of his topological objects. Dor considers, for example, the figure Lacan introduces in the Seminar on Identification, namely the torus, "a punctured surface forming a ring like structure around a central hole" (DL, 110), in order to "account for certain properties related to the dynamic of the desiring subject . . ." (DL, 110). What is particularly portrayed by the figure, according to Dor, is the metonymy of the subject's desire, and the very structure of *objet a* (DL, 113). Yet Dor asks whether the use of the torus, as such, actually constitutes a *mathematization* of the subject and its desire, that is to say, whether Lacan's uses of the mathematical objects measures up to the rigors of such a project (DL, 114). Dor distinguishes, then, between a figure that would be part of a rigorously scientific project on the one hand, and simply an illustrative metaphor, on the other hand—a representational dynamics which is non-formal, foreign to the principles of topology, and essentially imaginary.

In his essay, "Sociology Before Linguistics: Lacan's Debt to Durkheim," Stephen Michelman proposes to read Lacan's theory from the perspective of the French tradition of sociology and social anthropology, a tradition that plays a "determinative role in the development of Lacan's mature thought" (DL, 127). Michelman makes the thought-provoking claim that Durkheim's work, filtered through Lévi-Strauss, "provided the initial impetus for Lacan's symbolic turn" (DL, 131). In this respect, Michelman—through Durkheim—finds in Lacan not the sign but the social, not the individual but the collective. Michelman claims, moreover, that it is not Lacan's "theory of the sign but a new *picture of the social* that constitutes one of Lacan's major contributions to analytic theory" (DL, 127). Rather than a revolutionary theory, then, Michelman finds that Lacan's work represents an evolutionary development of thought which stems from Durkheim. Michelman states that this more evolutionary place "dims the allure of an unprecedented science of the unconscious and allows one to perceive more clearly the need to reconsider certain sociological dimensions of mind and mental illness . . ." (DL, 128).

Judith Feher Gurewich is a sociologist who practices psychotherapy in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and directs a workshop on



Lacan at the Center of Literary and Cultural Studies at Harvard University. Her article, entitled "Toward a New Alliance between Psychoanalysis and Social Theory," proposes that "Lacan's views on the processes that enable a human being to become an active member of the social world may be of use in elucidating why the masters of sociological thought have failed to fully comprehend the mismatch between the individual and society" (*DL*, 151). Feher Gurewich gives credit to sociology for having established the social roots of human subjectivity, even the social essence of consciousness (*DL*, 152). Yet the conflict between the individual and the social, she asserts, is one that neither sociology nor psychoanalysis has thematized adequately (*DL*, 153). Feher Gurewich credits Lacan with a theory of desire that challenges both the psychoanalytic and the sociological conceptions of the individual and forges an alliance between those two disciplines. The virtues of Lacan's theory, she argues, are the result of Lacan's vision of sexual difference, his problematic of the mirror stage, and his perspective of the feminine or the "supplementary jouissance" (*DL*, 154). Feher Gurewich subsequently focuses on the extent to which "Lacan's theory of human desire," expressed in *méconnaissance*, for example, "bridges what has been identified in sociology as a gap between the realm of biology (drives) and the social or cultural" (*DL*, 163).

With Dor's critique of Lacan's topological figures—the mathematical paradigms—the question of Lacan's relation to science can be considered in other terms. Those "other terms" are given explicit form through Michelman's and Feher Gurewich's reading of Lacan's relation to social science. Their contributions suggest the need for an epistemological reorientation in our reading of Lacan. These questions are investigated in the next section of this volume, which focuses on Lacan's relation to aesthetics and literature.

## Lacan, Aesthetics, and Literature

*William Richardson*

*David Pettigrew*

*Thomas Brockelman*

The essays in this section explore the remarkable depth of Lacan's relation to literature. The constant use of literary references is a striking

ing aspect of Lacan's corpus; references are made to Sophocles, Shakespeare, Claudel, and Poe, to name a few. The centrality of aesthetics and "the literary" in Lacan's work is emphasized through articles by William Richardson and David Pettigrew. Richardson and Pettigrew focus on the Lacan of Seminars VII and VIII, seminars that treat respectively, in part, of Sophocles and Claudel.<sup>9</sup> Richardson considers the problem of an ethics of psychoanalysis in the context of Lacan's appropriation of Claudel. Pettigrew's article explores the extent to which Lacan's recourse to literature could shed light on the scientificity of his project. His article, furthermore, suggests that Lacan's appropriation of literature and tragic drama is central to the problem of an ethics of psychoanalysis, the ethics of a divided subject. Thomas Brockelman's article shows how Lacan's theory evolved within the fabric of aesthetic modernism, particularly that of surrealism, with paradoxical results. Brockelman extends our appreciation of Lacan's relation to aesthetics, as his paper explores Lacan's relation to the anti-representationalism of aesthetic modernism.

William Richardson's article, "The Third Generation of Desire," focuses on Lacan's reading in *Seminar VIII* of Paul Claudel's trilogy, *The Hostage*, *Stale Bread*, and *The Humiliated Father*, a text that Lacan reads as a contemporary Oedipal tragedy. Richardson's focus on Lacan's treatment of Claudel draws our attention to Lacan's appropriation of literature.

What is particularly at issue in Richardson's essay is a reflection "on the subject of the unconscious in terms of ethical discourse" (*DL*, 172). Richardson is, accordingly, concerned with the question of desire. "What is more central to the phenomenon of transference," Richardson asks, "than the function of desire?" (*DL*, 172) Richardson's essay suggests that desire is not the desire of a discrete subject but the desire of the other: literally, *another's* desire. In the context of the Claudel's trilogy, this motif is considered in terms of the destiny of desire that stretches across several generations (*DL*, 172). This desire is a desire of the other, whether unconscious or somehow pre-existent to the subject in the sense of the subject's inter-generational obligation or destiny. In the case of Claudel's trilogy, this destiny begins with Sygne and her cousin George, descendants of the aristocratic Coufontaine family in 1812, in *The Hostage*, connects to Sygne's son Louis de Coufontaine, in *Stale Bread*, and finally culminates with Louis' daugh-

ter, Pensée, in *The Humiliated Father*. Each episode, each character in the story involves the promise of love as well as its concomitant betrayal; in the end, the promise of love is coupled with the impossibility of its realization. With Claudel—or, more precisely, with Lacan's Claudel—the subject is swept along by a destiny beyond its control, condemned to a betrayal of its own desire. Richardson asks about the possibility that the subject can be true or untrue to its desire, in the face of such a symbolic destiny. Until *this* question can be raised, Richardson concludes, we cannot yet speak of an ethics of psychoanalysis.

David Pettigrew's article, "Lacan: The Poetic Unconscious," was first delivered as a commentary on William Richardson's paper at a conference at Pennsylvania State University.<sup>10</sup> Pettigrew's paper attempts to come to terms with Lacan's self-immersion in literature, as well as with the implications of that immersion for an ethics of psychoanalysis. Pettigrew underlines the neutralization of the subject as an ethical agent that Lacan's text implies, and considers its ethics in terms of Lacan's recourse to tragic drama. For Pettigrew, Lacan's recourse to the tragic drama has been overlooked or unappreciated due to Lacan's later turn to the formalization of his discourse in terms of mathemes and algorithms. Pettigrew's focus on the "poetic Lacan," via Freud, is structured through recourse to Aristotle's science of poetics. Thus, Pettigrew attempts to effect an epistemological reorientation of our reading of Lacanian ethics, in terms of poetics. With Lacan, Pettigrew finds that the ethics of the subject is found in the myth, whose function is to produce and indicate the "suffering of the signifier." The subject's desire is seized in the dramatic image and made "most real." In the end the subject is not the agent of its choice, but is caught in the metonymy of desire, the experience of its own ecstatic annihilation. Yet Pettigrew asserts that Lacan's appropriation of tragic drama brings us to see that such an ethics is not impossible: "It is an ethics of the impossible, that of a castrated subject . . . that can only take place in the locus of the impossible" (*DL*, 203).

Thomas Brockelman's article, "Lacan & Modernism: Representation and Its Vicissitudes," critically reappraises Lacan's position in relation to the aesthetic movements associated with modernism, and their "fundamental transgression of the representational" (*DL*, 210). Brockelman asserts that Lacan's proclivity for Surrealism, for example,

lay in the Surrealists' rejection of representation. With the rejection of representation, Lacan found the possibility for breaking out of the "imaginary" identifications of the ego (*DL*, 208). Lacan's sympathy for the surrealists, according to Brockelman, was a rejection of the self-representation that was the primary concern for philosophy and the arts as a result of the enlightenment.

However, Brockelman's reappraisal of Lacan's position, particularly his use of the imaginary and symbolic registers, leads to a "reappraisal of an important thread in that history of the arts called 'modernism'" (*DL*, 212). Brockelman locates a representational fulcrum in Lacan's work which is precisely that of the imaginary, a fulcrum that constitutes and divides the subject. Brockelman asserts that the "very precondition for the fantasy of a narcissistic union between viewer and representation is thus the insurmountable gap between them" (*DL*, 213). It is a representation, he continues, that "leaves out that subjectivity that is dynamic . . .," and "excludes what is most essentially human" (*DL*, 214). With this imaginary captation, this figural paralysis, the imaginary precludes transformation and evolves a radical aggressivity which would seek its own destruction. "In the imaginary, desire must fail completely precisely where it succeeds completely and this failure gives birth to an aggression which Lacan places at the core of all human violence" (*DL*, 216).

Brockelman writes finally, "I want to suggest that the Lacanian distinction between symbolic and imaginary—between two different modes of representation—can provide an extraordinary enrichment to our understanding of certain moments in the history of aesthetic modernism" (*DL*, 219).

## The Question of Sexuality and Gender

*Moustapha Safouan*

*Cora Monroe*

*Debra Bergoffen*

The positions of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis with respect to the questions of gender and sexuality have been the subject of much debate. Lacan himself has encouraged such debate with his provocative phrases such as "*The woman does not exist*" or, "there is

no sexual relation." The three essays that comprise the section "Sexuality and Gender" engage these very issues. French Lacanian analyst Moustapha Safouan propounds Lacan's discovery of the representational nature of unconscious memories, and emphasizes as well the absence or loss they represent in their intrinsic irreality, as a fulcrum of sexual desire. Cora Monroe reinterprets Lamartine's *Jocelyn* with respect to Lacan's concepts such as the lack of sexual relation and the primacy of the symbolic father. Debra Bergoffen takes issue with the master signifier of the symbolic phallus, in order to challenge the limitations it implies for feminine gender and sexuality.

Moustapha Safouan has been a long standing member of the French psychoanalytic community. (His constant presence in Elizabeth Roudinesco's *Jacques Lacan & Co., a history of Psychoanalysis in France 1925-1985* attests to this.) Apart from the numerous books he has authored on Lacan's thought (among them *Le Transfert et le désir de l'analyste, Jacques Lacan et la Question de la formation des analystes*), he has the distinction of having prepared the first translation into Arabic of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

"Sexuality in Neurosis and Psychosis" is a close reading, from a Lacanian perspective, of two letters that Freud wrote to Jung, on May 23 and June 6 1907. Dr. Safouan aims ultimately at clarifying Lacan's advance in relation to the representational or imaginary status of the object of desire. The object of desire is considered to be non-biological and non-instinctual, and, to the extent that such an object is only representational, it becomes unrealized. As Safouan asserts, this was not Freud's position, since the object of the cathexis was ultimately a real object. In his words: "This representation mediates . . . what? It mediates what we call a fixation to the maternal breast; with the difference that we can see how it would be misleading to assign this fixation to the pleasure, whether sexual or not, which she felt in nursing: since she did not have it" (*DL*, 245). It is this fictitious object that "produces a void or incompleteness forbidding the organic unity of the individual form closing itself in a whole or totality" (*DL*, 246). For Safouan, it was this ambiguously representational aspect of the object that was Lacan's fundamental discovery.

Cora Monroe reads Lamartine's *Jocelyn* with Lacan. With this critical perspective, Monroe asserts that traditional readings of *Jocelyn* have failed to see "the poem's tragic illustration of the lack of sexual relation" (*DL*, 249). Monroe finds in Lamartine's text a tragic chain of

renunciations of desire: Jocelyn sacrifices his desire as he becomes a priest “in order to leave his part of a meager inheritance to his sister” (*DL*, 250); Jocelyn sacrifices his love for Laurence when he undergoes his emergency ordination. Jocelyn and Laurence’s relationship must ensue, Monroe suggests, “outside sex [*horsesexe*].” Laurence, in Lamartine’s text, is a girl disguised as a boy. Monroe writes: “In Lacanian terms, their idyllic relationship is *amour*, ‘soul-ing,’ in which neither a man and a woman participate as such, because as Lacan puts it, the sexual relationship does not exist” (*DL*, 250). Monroe’s reading of *Jocelyn*, then, is thoroughly constructed on the Lacanian paradigm.

Monroe’s critical analysis then focuses on the “soul-love” that “Jocelyn imposes on Laurence.” Jocelyn undergoes a hysteria, becoming a woman while attempting to maintain the false identity of the masculine position. Once Jocelyn has discovered that Laurence is a girl, he must strive to deny it. However, “he cannot change her voice, or more precisely, he cannot ignore the unconscious message it bears” (*DL*, 265). Laurence’s crime is to have loved with romantic passion. When discovered to be a woman, Laurence fades, as Monroe writes the Lacanian phrase aptly: “*on la dit femme, on la diffâme*” (“she is called woman, she is defamed”). As Jocelyn denies Laurence’s gender, there is what Monroe calls a “Perverse *Jouissance*.” “Perverse” because Jocelyn derives an erotic thrill from pushing Laurence to the limit of her frustration simply because he cannot accept that she is a woman in love with him as a man. “Divested of her disguise, bereft of the promise of marriage, thoroughly hysterical, Laurence embarks on the long road to self-destruction” (*DL*, 269). Laurence is condemned to the suffering of the Real (*DL*, 268). Monroe’s reading of Lamartine’s *Jocelyn*, then, with Lacan, provides a thought-provoking reading of *Jocelyn* as well as an insightful engagement of the Lacan of Seminar XX.

Debra Bergoffen’s essay, “Queering the Phallus,” reminds us that the discourse with respect to the psychoanalytic subject requires that we accept the narrative or the myth of the unconscious and of the Oedipus Complex. For Bergoffen, Lacan’s re-reading of Freud takes place within this metanarrative. Yet Lacan, according to her, assumes a unique place in this metanarrative. Bergoffen writes: “The mirror stage announces the uniqueness of Lacan’s approach to the subject” (*DL*, 276). Bergoffen analyzes the central nature of the mirror stage in

the Lacanian corpus as well as its status as a nexus of *aggressivity* and *méconnaissance*.

Bergoffen emphasizes moreover that the imaginary contaminates the symbolic. This move from the imaginary to the symbolic is a transition—a transitivity, as Bergoffen puts it—that occurs through the mediation of the paternal metaphor and the phallic signifier. Bergoffen writes that as a result of this transition, this resolution, the child accepts its finitude, its status as lack, and as well the impossibility of its desire (*DL*, 279). The crucial point is that such a castration “marks both sexes” (*DL*, 279). “So long as we speak of castration,” she writes, “we will be lured by imaginary confusions to see the cut of subjectivity as sexually differentiated. . . . So long as we speak of castration, both men and women will be lured to evade their subjectivity” (*DL*, 285). Mutual castration is a state of affairs which is oddly asexual; the symbolic is coopted by the imaginary. The supercession of the Oedipus complex by the phallus leads from “an open war of all against all to a subtle war of men against women” (*DL*, 287), leading to the primal crime of the destruction of the woman and of the mother (*DL*, 287). With Irigaray, Bergoffen offers a critical reading of the exclusion of the imaginary mother by the symbolic father. For Bergoffen, Irigaray holds out a thematic of a woman that is fluid and mobile in such a way that the symbolic and imaginary are interwoven. Ultimately, for Bergoffen, the phallus is held to be inadequate for such a perpetual and dynamic becoming.

## Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice

*Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen*

*Wilfried Ver Eecke*

*Richard Boothby*

*John Muller*

The question of Lacan's dissemination must ultimately encounter the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. Certainly such a theory and practice has been deeply transformed by Lacan's “return” to Freud. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen challenges, through Lacan, the relevance of the Oedipus Complex for analytic practice. Wilfried Ver Eecke and

Richard Boothby revisit Lacan's categories of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real; Ver Eecke, in relation to Lacan's treatment of psychosis, and Boothby, in relation to the death drive. Finally, John Muller's essay provides a case study in psychosis from a Lacanian perspective that is enriched through recourse to Peirce and Winnicott.

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's "The Oedipus Problem in Freud and Lacan" interrogates Lacan's "return to Freud" in terms of Lacan's treatment of the Oedipus complex, noting that "Lacan was undoubtedly the first to have deliberately confronted it" (*DL*, 296). Borch-Jacobsen himself confronts what he refers to as the fundamental aporia of the Oedipus complex: an aporia resulting from the conflict between object-cathexis (the mother) and identification (the father) in the Oedipus Complex. For Freud, the child must overcome the ambivalence which is constitutive of identification. This overcoming, which takes the form of the destruction of the Oedipus complex, is a *normalization*. He writes, "The child can surmount the preoedipal identification"—with the parent of the same gender—"only by 'reinforcing' the same identification and, thus by possibly perpetuating or even aggravating its results" (*DL*, 302). Indeed, overcoming the identification with the father involves, for Freud, a normalizing move to heterosexuality. Rather than normalizing, the Oedipus problem *perpetuates* the problem. Borch-Jacobsen's turn to Lacan calls into question the crucial transition for Freud of the pre-Oedipal identification into the post-Oedipal identification: a transition without which the Oedipus complex would collapse (*DL*, 303). It was Lacan, claims Borch-Jacobsen, who called this transition into question. While Lacan admits identification, he separates the identificatory ego-ideal from the repressive super-ego, and resolves the obvious conflict/ambivalence with the symbolic, a notion that he draws from sociological theory concerning cultures in which the problem of identification is resolved (*DL*, 306). "Lacan is trying to say . . . that the Freudian Oedipus complex, far from being a universal mechanism, is actually a simple reflection of the modern family crisis" (*DL*, 306). Thus, the Oedipus complex is a *neurotic complex* rather than *normalizing* (*DL*, 306). Borch-Jacobsen undertakes a critical reading of Lacan's problematization of this normalizing hypothesis, through the categories of the imaginary (phallus) and the symbolic (phallus) and, ultimately, he raises the question of the pertinence of Oedipus complex for the psychoanalytic practice.



Wilfried Ver Eecke's essay, "Lacan and Schatzman: Reflections on the Concept of 'Paternal Metaphor,'" "seeks to maintain the validity of Lacan's concept of paternal metaphor, while clarifying its interpretation in particular by confronting the challenge presented by Schatzman's book *Soul Murder*" (DL, 316). Ver Eecke emphasizes that the phallus, for Lacan, concerns the psychological meaning of sexuality, a meaning that Lacan clarified "by means of the philosophies of Hegel and Heidegger, the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, and the linguistic theories of Saussure and Jakobson" (DL, 318-19). The genesis of the Lacanian treatment of the phallus, according to Ver Eecke, resulted in the distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary, as well as Lacan's treatment of the symbolic as "a way out of the impossible contradictions of the imaginary ordering" (DL, 321). Ver Eecke offers two clinical vignettes to illustrate the Lacanian concepts of the symbolic and the imaginary. Moreover, he emphasizes the psychological, that is to say, the non-anatomical nature of the phallus. From this understanding, he inquires whether the phallus is the sole concept that implies the subject's essential relation to sexuality, or whether some other concept might serve this function (DL, 332).

Finally, Ver Eecke offers a reinterpretation of the phenomenon of the paternal metaphor in psychosis in children. He hypothesizes that rather than being a passive victim of the process of transition from the imaginary to the symbolic, the child is an active participant in the move to the paternal. Ver Eecke refutes Schatzman's position that Schreber's psychosis resulted from his sadistic father, thus challenging Lacan's theory of psychosis. Rather than view Lacan's theory as "attributing psychosis exclusively to the mother," Ver Eecke asserts that it is "important to correct such a one-sided theory" (DL, 332).

Richard Boothby's article, "The Psychological Meaning of Life and Death," questions Lacan's relation to Freud on the basis of the three cardinal categories of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. Those three Lacanian categories are questioned in relation to the life and death drives (DL, 338). Professor Boothby is the author of the recent *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud*. Boothby has been guided by Lacan in this respect, who has emphasized the centrality of the death drive: an emphasis that marks his distance "from much of mainstream psychoanalysis" (DL, 338-9). For Lacan, the insertion into the symbolic order carries a "death" which provides the key to the riddle of human aggressivity (DL, 342). Boothby

opposes Lacan's psychological treatment of the death drive, linked as it is to the imaginary, to Freud's persistently biological treatment, a treatment linked to the sexual drive or energetic models of the psyche (*DL*, 342). Yet Boothby claims that Freud's energetics endures in Lacan's work as the real (*DL*, 346–7). Death for Lacan is not the demise of a biological organism but the disintegration of the imaginary ego . . . (*DL*, 349). Death is as well related to the symbolic, specifically in the relation of the symbolic to the imaginary. Boothby asserts that the symbolic has an essentially disruptive relation to the imaginary and, moreover, an indirect access to the real of desire beyond the imaginary (*DL*, 352). The real, as well, partakes of the death drive as a kind of touchstone of non-existence from which the subject emerges and to which it returns. Boothby ultimately reads the death drive in Lacan not as a pure self-destruction but as self-transformative, "an effect of the tension between two fundamental structuring principles of the psychical process" (*DL*, 356).

The section on *Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice* concludes with John Muller's "A Semiotic Correlate of Psychotic States," an essay that continues the investigation of psychosis, the "drama of madness," on the basis of Lacan's claim that it is "in relation to the signifier that this drama is situated" (*DL*, 366). Dr. Muller's contribution is in fact an account of a clinical session in which the patient, named "William," states that "words can be such slippery things" and insists repeatedly that the doctor "write that down." Dr. Muller did indeed write: his article provides a firsthand look into the psychotic state from a Lacanian perspective. We find that first-person references are largely absent from the patient's speech. Moreover, the patient does not recognize limits or difference, and observed as few practical boundaries as possible. William announces in fact that he will stay at the clinic "until he invents an automobile engine without exhaust," and states that in a previous year he had "walked on fire, on hot coals, without feeling pain." (*DL*, 372–3). Ultimately, Muller interprets his patient's problem as the lack of the relation with the Other (*DL*, 379). The patient fails to differentiate himself from the Other, a situation that could have been precipitated by the loss of his mother.

Muller's analysis of William undertakes a translation of Lacan's Other into what has been called "the holding environment," "in order to elaborate the semiotic framework of treatment" (*DL*, 374). Winnicott's notion of the holding environment refers to the infant's early

months' integration promoted by the "technique of infant care whereby an infant is kept warm, handled and bathed and rocked and named" (*DL*, 375). Muller finds an analogous notion in Lacan, in the infant's first relation with the mother as object (*DL*, 374). For Muller, this maternal holding, or relation, is structured "by and as a semiotic field" (*DL*, 375). Thus, through the Mother as other, as structured relation, the infant is ushered into the symbolic order. The "semiotic fault in psychosis" is precisely a breakdown in the semiotic field of the holding environment, a failure of the holding environment to serve as a limited field of signifying convention (*DL*, 376).

Throughout the articles comprising our volume, Lacan clearly does not appear as the *Absolute Master* (to borrow the title from Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's book). Nor does the volume assume that Lacan's work is a *delusion* (to borrow this time from the translation of the title of François Roustang's text).<sup>11</sup> *Disseminating Lacan* is simply a call to reading: reading Lacan in such a way as to "endlessly open a snag in writing that can no longer be mended" (*D*, 26). Collectively, the articles selected for the volume reveal the threefold discursive movement to which we have referred; a movement which renders Lacan's purported system all the more open to a thoughtful engagement and critical reading: an engagement and reading that would enrich and advance Lacanian studies.

Lacan apparently considered such diverse interpretations and commentaries on his work to be memorials to the fact that he had been refused by his very audience: psychoanalysts. In his preface to Anika Lemaire's book, Lacan wrote: "It has happened, then. Nothing has happened to them, only to me . . ." <sup>12</sup> He seemed to fear that future commentaries would only report on his work literally, like "the amber that holds the fly so as to know nothing of its flight" (*JL*, xv). By attempting to reveal the various movements that continue to determine his text, *Disseminating Lacan* would perhaps play a part in giving Lacan his wings. . . .

2

## Notes

1. "Pour l'amour de Lacan," in *Lacan avec les philosophes* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel S.A., 1991). Hereafter cited as *LP*. Derrida presented the paper in English at a conference entitled "Law and the Post Modern Mind," Benjamin Cardozo School

of Law, Yeshiva University, October 1993. Professor Derrida's lecture was translated by Yifat Hachamovitch. The lecture has subsequently been published as: Jacques Derrida, "For the Love of Lacan," trans. Brent Edwards and Ann Leckerle, *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 16, nos. 3/4 (1995): pp. 699–728.

2. See for example, page 441 of "Le Facteur de la Vérité," in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

3. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 26, our emphasis. Hereafter cited as *D*. In "Pour l'amour de Lacan," Derrida takes issue with no less than eight features of Lacan's discourse: 1. the motif of the circular itinerary of the letter; 2. the value of truth as adequation; 3. the problematic of full speech; 4. Lacan's disqualification of the recording of his discourse; 5. the transcendental position of the phallus; 6. Lacan's phonocentrism; 7. the underestimation of the literary structure of narration; 8. the very tripartition of the imaginary, symbolic, and real.

4. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Title of the Letter: A Reading of Lacan*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. xxix. and 105–132.

5. ". . . this text performs a sort of combination of borrowings, perversions, subversions or repetitions by which it institutes itself" (*TL*, 105).

6. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. Douglas Brick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 1. Hereafter cited as *AM*.

7. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1977), p.1. Hereafter cited as *E*.

8. Lacan writes that, "Psychoanalysis will provide scientific bases for its theory or for its technique *only by formalizing* in an adequate fashion the essential dimensions of its experience . . ." *E*, p. 77. Our emphasis.

9. Jacques Lacan, 1960–61, *Le Séminaire. Livre VIII. Le Transfert*, ed. J.-A. Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1991). Jacques Lacan, 1959–60, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Dennis Porter, ed. J.-A. Miller (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992).

10. The event was a Colloquium convened by Professor Joseph Kockelmans, entitled "On the Impact of French Philosophy on American Philosophy Today." October 23–25, 1992. Pennsylvania State University.

11. François Roustang, *The Lacanian Delusion*, trans. Greg Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

12. Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. vii. Hereafter cited as *JL*.