

PSYCHOANALYSIS & CINEMA

EDITED BY

E. ANN KAPLAN



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IN MEMORIAM
CLAIRE JOHNSTON

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Acknowledgments

Let me begin by saying a word in honor of Claire Johnston. I heard about Claire Johnston's tragic suicide just as I was completing work on this project. Her untimely death at the moment when I was involved in a project that already entailed a looking back to the past, indeed, a rethinking of the 1970s British film work to which Claire contributed actively, passionately, made me realize anew her particular influence. It also made me regret the loss to the scholarly community of an energetic and original intellect.

I first met Claire in 1974, when I interviewed her, together with Pam Cook and Laura Mulvey, about theories of women's cinema. I remember Claire as a dynamic, forceful, and articulate speaker. She was enthusiastic about what she was doing, and committed to the May '68 politics that still provided the model for the group. Of all the people involved in film studies that I met that year, Claire seemed to me one of the most committed to combining activist leftist politics with the psychoanalytic, semiotic, Althusserian, and structuralist theories that were newly at the center of British work in film.

Claire's theories of female representation, as evident in her 1973 essay in the booklet, *Notes on Women's Cinema*, that she edited for SEFT, made a great deal of sense to me at the time. In fact, they echoed lines I had been developing in my "Women and Film" courses at Monmouth College, New Jersey, in 1970–73. So from the start I experienced an intellectual sympathy, a similarity in ways of seeing and thinking that was to continue over the years. Doing the interview was important for me in clarifying aspects of the new theories and in helping me to develop a perspective that I was to pursue in later work. I particularly appreciated Claire's work on Dorothy Arzner in 1975; once again, she was at the forefront of

theoretical developments in taking on a Hollywood female director, little known beforehand, and in finding ways to illuminate what was going on in the films.

The passion with which Claire engaged theoretical positions did not prevent her from rethinking them later on. Indeed, the very strength of her convictions at any one time perhaps entailed a falling away later on. The extreme point to which she pushed a position enabled her finally to see its problems and the need to develop other intellectual strategies. Her essays in *Edinburgh Magazine*, especially that on *Anne of the Indies* (reprinted here) show her beginning to critique the Lacanian model and to see the urgency of linking psychoanalytic theory to practical politics. Her work on British Independent Cinema in the thirties and that on the Irish Cinema brought her close to important questions about the politics of independent filmmaking and about "nationality" in cinema.

I was safely away from the intellectual and personal battles that were sometimes intense in the heyday of *Screen* and the development of British Film Culture around The British Film Institute. I valued my yearly meetings with Claire in London or over here, and the intense sharing of intellectual ideas that always took place. Claire's contributions to the evolution of feminist film theory go without saying: even where one disagreed with her, or where her ideas later proved incomplete, her brilliance and her foresight were impressive. Her sheer intellectual energy, her ability to articulate her positions, made her an unusual scholar. It was partly her intellectual honesty, her prescience about the disastrous political direction of things in British higher education in the mid-1980s that stymied her work and made her give up hope. We will all miss her energetic mind, even as we honor her contributions to a field in which she was a pioneer.

I would like to thank Paul Willemen, co-editor of *Jacques Tourneur* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Festival, 1985), and Michael Hughes, executor of Claire Johnston's estate, for permission to reprint Claire Johnston's essay "Femininity and the Masquerade: *Anne of the Indies*," originally published in *Jacques Tourneur*, eds. Claire Johnston and Paul Willemen.

I would also like to thank Martha Gever, editor of *The Independent*, for permission to reprint Yvonne Rainer's essay "Some Ruminations around Cinematic Antidotes to the Oedipal Net(tles) while Playing with De Lauraedipus Mulvey, or, He May Be Off Screen, but . . .," originally published in the April 1986 issue of *The Independent*.

In addition, *Discourse* has kindly permitted reprinting Linda Peckham's essay, "Not Speaking with Language/Speaking with No Language: Leslie Thornton's *Adynata*," originally published in *Discourse*, No. 8 (Fall-Winter, 1986-87).

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And thanks also to Raymond Bellour for permitting us to reprint his essay on Tourneur, originally in French as "Croire au Cinéma," in *Caméra-Style* (Paris), Special Issue on Jacques Tourneur (May 1986), pp. 35–43.

Introduction:

From Plato's Cave to Freud's Screen

E. Ann Kaplan

One of the aims of this book is to make available an anthology of writing about cinema and psychoanalysis comparable to the several anthologies that deal with literature and psychoanalysis.¹ The fact that there are as yet no anthologies dealing specifically with cinema and psychoanalysis, and showing the diversity of methods (as indeed the literature/psychoanalysis volumes do) perhaps accounts for the common misconception that film theory in general (and the feminist approach in particular) relies mainly on Lacan. This book offers representative examples of some diverse ways in which film scholars theorize psychoanalysis and use it in analyzing specific films.²

It is unfortunate that, historically, literary and film scholars have not shown more interest in each others' work: it is to be regretted that even very recent literature/psychoanalysis anthologies have not included essays on film³: although this is understandable in terms of the disciplinary boundaries around which we continue to construct our scholarly activities (i.e. our journals, our conferences, our departments),⁴ it would seem that dialogue could benefit both groups. Indeed, a brief comparison and contrast of the development of psychoanalytic methods in literature and in film raises interesting questions on a series of levels: these have to do with differences between film and literature as aesthetic modes, with differences in the *institutions* of film and literature, including the high/low culture debate, and with historical, cultural, and intellectual issues that influenced when a psychoanalytic method was developed for each mode. A brief review of the main developments in psychoanalytic literary methods will provide a coherent perspective through which to look at film and psychoanalysis; I will then turn to consider what has been going on in film from 1968 to the present.

As is well known, psychoanalytic literary methods emerged in Germany in the 1930s and were taken up in the 1940s in America.⁵ These early efforts relied heavily on Freud's essays on "Creative Writing and Day Dreaming" and "Family Romances," as well as his various studies of artists from Sophocles and Shakespeare to Leonardo da Vinci and Dostoevsky. Perhaps the genre is best represented in the pioneering book on Poe by Freud's friend and pupil, Marie Bonaparte. In the foreword to the book, Freud wrote that thanks to Bonaparte's study of Poe, "we now realize how many of the characteristics of Poe's works were conditioned by his personality, and can see how that personality derived from intense emotional fixations and painful infantile experiences."⁶

The analyses of authors that followed took these words to heart: written by practicing Freudian psychoanalysts rather than by literary scholars (Edmund Wilson, however, was a rare early exception⁷) the texts show a critic positioned vis-à-vis an author as the psychoanalyst vis-à-vis a patient. The piece of literature stands in the place of the dream or the associational flow on the couch. As in that situation, the analyst/critic infers from the dream/text's themes and manifest content the author's latent content betraying his/her neuroses; usually, as William Phillips points out,⁸ these involved the Oedipal complex, anality, and schizoid tendencies. The text was treated like a record of symptoms to the neglect of its specifically literary qualities (its intellectual context, its link to traditions and genres, or its status as an aesthetic object⁹) valued by critics of the period. What we have is a form of literary biography that has come to be known as "psycho-biography."

Brief mention should be made of the work of Abram Kardiner, who was a faculty member in the New York Psychoanalytic Institute and an Associate in Anthropology at Columbia University when he wrote *The Individual and His Society* in 1939. This book in many ways anticipates recent psychoanalytic methods in cultural studies; however, because of his criticism of certain Freudian concepts and his interest in combining psychoanalysis with methods in sociology and anthropology, he does not seem to have influenced psychoanalytic literary methods in the forties. It is Kardiner's interest in the shaping influence on individuals of institutions—including cultural ones like myth and folklore—that distinguishes his work from the psychoanalytic literary work mentioned above.

Kardiner describes the differences between his and other psychoanalytic cultural study clearly: the view that man "is phylogenetically endowed with certain drives or 'instincts' which press for satisfaction through objects in the outer world," leads, according to Kardiner, to a culture being described "in terms of a subjectively felt drive such as 'phallic,' and 'anal sadistic,' etc., in accordance with the phases of development established in the individual."¹⁰ From this point of view, Kardiner points

out, the institutions "are adventitious excrescences consequent upon certain drives seeking for expression, and hence quite meaningless as influences on human nature" (p. 16). His own viewpoint in the book rather emphasizes institutions, "and stresses the significant role they play in creating the adaptive systems of the individual" (p. 17). Kardiner remains classically Freudian in regarding the basic biological needs of man (needs for food, sex, procreation, protection, etc.) as determining culture (rather than language, or the history of signifying systems in general); but at the same time he sees the way that institutions (however formed) shape the individual. For instance, representations of Marquesan women in myths and folklore puzzle him because of their discrepancy with observable behavior. He seeks to explain the gap with the theory of representation as *neurotic distortion*, rather than as "autochthonous creations unrelated to the realities in the living social situation" (p. 214). In other words, fantasy is the mediation between mythic conventions and the material pressures of social institutions (family organizations, the systems of laws and taboos) that shape people's psychic lives.

A later generation of critics, now coming from literature, remedied many of the problems with the first wave of psychoanalytic cultural studies that had disturbed academic literary scholars. These authors paid due attention to the special language and status of the work, and its aesthetic nature. Lionel Trilling, for instance, began to analyze some thematic and structural links between psychoanalysis and literature in the early fifties. He stresses Freud's own deep interest in literature (he quotes Freud's "Not I but the poets discovered the unconscious"), but notes that Freud's contribution to literature comes from what he says about the nature of the human mind rather than from what he says about literature.¹¹ Trilling argues that literature and psychoanalysis share some common themes, i.e. the conception of the self, the opposition between reality and pleasure, and the conflict between love and power; he argues further that they share a structural similarity in terms of the reader's and analyst's willingness to suspend disbelief (in Coleridge's sense) in the selfhood of the other (via identification); both also deal with society's unconscious assumptions ("... the unconscious of society," Trilling says, "may be said to have been imagined before the unconscious of the individual," p. 104).

Later still, Steven Marcus in his by now classic account of the Dora case history, moved the argument to a different level by claiming that Freud's text fulfilled the demands of modern literature.¹² Literature and the psychoanalytic text are now one and the same, the analyst in fact a novelist—an idea recently explored at some length by Neil Hertz.¹³ If the first generation of authors subjugated literature to psychoanalysis, this final move reversed things and subjugated psychoanalysis to literature.

In the late 1970s, a new phase of the literary psychoanalytic approach

emerged from Jacques Lacan's writings about literature. (Interestingly enough, this work developed a few years after film theorists had made their own special use of Lacan—described below—beginning in the early seventies). Lacan's essays on *Hamlet* and on Poe, particularly "The Purloined Letter" (dating from 1959 but only recently translated into English¹⁴), gave rise to numerous debates and opened up a whole new area of work in literary studies, with *Yale French Studies* braving the way.¹⁵

Interestingly, Lacan's own essays privilege psychoanalysis over literature but in a manner dissimilar from Freud's early followers. Lacan, that is, takes the character rather than the author as a kind of case history, but even here analysis is in the service of uncovering a particular *psychic structure*.¹⁶ A brief look at psychoanalytic readings of *Hamlet* before Lacan will illustrate clearly similarities and differences: First, in his short reading of *Hamlet* in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud asserts (as he would do more formally in "Creative Writing and Day Dreaming") that there is a link between a poet's mind and the psychic state of the characters he creates.¹⁷ In this case, Freud links the producing of the play about the death of a Father to Shakespeare's own loss of a son, Hamlet. He also situates the play in the context of a culture quite different from that in which Sophocles produced *Oedipus Rex* (which Freud had discussed just prior to talking about *Hamlet*). The differences between *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet* for Freud are those between a culture that figured forth oedipal desire in a literal way, allowing illicit wishes to be enacted; and one that could not allow itself to know its oedipal desire and thus could only indicate it indirectly, even in works of the imagination. Rejecting earlier interpretations of the play attributing Hamlet's delay either to an excess of intellect or to neurasthenia, Freud argues that Hamlet's irresolution has to do with Hamlet's unconscious wish to do what Claudius has done, namely kill the Father and marry the mother.

Ernst Jones expands upon this reading in his book, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, but adds a new dimension in an essay on "The Death of Hamlet's Father," namely that the main theme in the play is Shakespeare's homosexuality.¹⁸ The ear, in this reading, stands in for the anus, and the poison for deadly semen. Meanwhile, in an exhaustive study of *Hamlet*, Morris Weitz objected to Jones's reading, not because of any distrust of psychoanalysis as a treatment or cure within the domain of daily life, but because Jones relied on evidence that could not be found within the text itself. For instance, the reader is asked to doubt the textual evidence for Hamlet's unflagging love for his father, and to change this evidence into its opposite, namely hatred for the father. Weitz goes to Wilson Dover for detailing what he sees as the fundamental error of this sort of psychoanalytic criticism, namely treating a character as if he were a living man instead of a figure in a dramatic composition.¹⁹

Lacan cannot be accused of quite this error, for Lacan sticks to the text in analyzing how *Hamlet* is the drama of a man who has "lost the way of his desire." The reading relies on certain Lacanian theories (such as the dependence of desire on the desire of the Other—in this case Hamlet's mother), but Lacan's concern is to explore the structure of desire evident in the text in order to demonstrate for his students how certain psychic processes *work*.²⁰ In the case of Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Lacan analyzes the ways in which the letter functions so as to construct/position the characters—to create particular kinds of subjects and intersubjective conditions. Lacan again wants to show something to his students, here "the truth which may be drawn from that moment of Freud's thought under study—namely, that it is the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject—by demonstrating . . . the decisive orientation which the subject receives from the itinerary of the signifier."²¹

Lacan's psychoanalytic apparatus is different from Freud's in important ways that make his work on a text less of a violation in New Critical terms. First, Lacan does not move back from the text to the author; where the Freudian method is ultimately biographical, Lacan's is textual. In this sense, Lacan may be aligned with structuralist literary and anthropological scholars. Second, the centrality of language, and particularly the devices of metaphor and metonymy, in Lacan's system bring him closer to the specifically "literary" qualities of the texts he handles. Thus, in Lacan literature is not subjugated to psychoanalysis as an institution, as it arguably is in the neo-Freudian readings.

While it is true that Lacan omits other elements traditionally involved in literary analysis—historical context; ideological implications; relation to conventions; genres; the matter of style and other specifically aesthetic issues; or more recent problems of the reader-text relationship—these are matters often omitted by structuralists. If these methods are controversial in literature departments, Lacan's theories are also a problem within the psychoanalytic institution partly because of the centrality of language (the province of literature surely) to his theories.²¹

Lacan's work is part of a larger movement, beginning in France in the sixties, toward breaking down traditional distinctions between literary and other kinds of text that had historically been so central in discussions of the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis. In her pioneering 1977 essay, Shoshana Felman, for instance, put psychoanalysis on a level with literature; she argued for "a real dialogue between literature and psychoanalysis, as between two different bodies of language and between two different modes of knowledge," which has to take place, she says "outside of the master-slave pattern. . . ."²² She stated that literature and psychoanalysis are linked in the sense that each constitutes the other's "unconscious." In a later essay on the limits and possibilities of psychoana-

lytic approaches, Felman shows how Lacan's *textual*, as against the common *biographical* method, enables him to see that "there is no longer a clear-cut opposition or well-defined border between literature and psychoanalysis."²³ Using Lacan's seminar on Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Felman argues that in Lacan's approach, "The status of the poet is no longer that of the (sick) patient but, if anything, that of the analyst" (p. 152). For Lacan, "there is no language in which interpretation can itself escape the effects of the unconscious" (p. 152). For Felman, "Poetry . . . is precisely the effect of a deadly struggle between consciousness and the unconscious" (p. 154).

Peter Brooks, meanwhile, seeking like Felman for a *textual* way of seeing interconnections between literature and psychoanalysis, finds analogies in the concept of transference.²⁴ Building on work by André Green,²⁵ Brooks argues for a structural and rhetorical similarity between transference in psychoanalysis and in the reader-text relationship. One of the few literary critics to conceptualize a similarity between *processes* in the psychoanalytic exchange and in the reader-text exchange, Brooks here approaches an important strand in psychoanalytic film theory, even though the model he is dealing with is different because of the different aesthetic modes involved: "In the transference situation of reading," Brooks argues, "as in the psychoanalytic transference, the reader must grasp not only what is said but always what the discourse intends, its implications, how it would work on him. He must, in Lacanian terms, refuse the text's demands in order to listen to its desire" (p. 12).

Meredith Anne Skura has made an exhaustive study of literary psychoanalytic approaches with the aim of clarifying similarities and differences between literature and psychoanalysis.²⁶ Perhaps better than any other critic, Skura clarifies the difference between unconscious behavior in literature, in daily life, and in the psychoanalytic session. In Shakespeare's drama, for instance, "the clusters of traits can only mean what they mean in the play itself . . ." (p. 41). Further, fictional worlds explain what the characters do, and the causes of their behavior "work on divine, natural and social levels, as well as on the level of the individual, divided will" (p. 40). Meanwhile, in the psychoanalytic session, there is no room for the cataloging of psychoanalytic theory, "but only for the slow unraveling of all disowned ideas and experiences, leading from the forgotten past to present behavior" (p. 40). Skura concludes that the literary critic can benefit most from simulating the psychoanalytic process *in the critical process*; the critic should use "all the resources of the psychoanalytic process—with its attention to the different aspects of the text; its distrust of literal reference; its lack of tact and its openness to counterintuitive meanings; and its self-consciousness about the process of interpretation" (p. 243). (It should be noted that Skura is using "process" in a different

sense than Brooks, who uses the transference process as a model for "talking about the relations of textual past, present and projected future" [p. 6] rather than about any personal past. Brooks is interested in "the rethinkings, reorderings, reinterpretations . . . ," [p. 13] that take place in the reading process.)

Felman, Brooks, and Skura all still implicitly assume a specificity to the literary text that each believes can be honored within a psychoanalytic method. But the very notion of differences between textual modes is called into question by a critical analysis like Barbara Johnson's "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida." Johnson is concerned with "the act of analysis which seems to occupy the center of the discursive stage, and the act of analysis of the act of analysis which in some way disrupts that centrality."²⁷ Johnson reveals in the contrasting readings of Poe's story a debate over psychoanalytic readings of literature like Lacan's: For Derrida, she notes, "the psychoanalytical reading is still blind to the functioning of the signifier *in the narration itself* . . . Lacan, according to Derrida, has made the 'signifier' into the story's truth." For Derrida, the *textual* signifier "resists being thus totalized into meaning, leaving an irreducible residue" (p. 483).

Johnson shows, however, that deconstruction also has a grounding signifier in its claims that nothing is closed, nothing stable. Derrida repeats Lacan's mistake by "filling in what *Lacan* left blank . . . ," thus copying "precisely the gesture of blank-filling for which he is criticizing Lacan" (p. 464).²⁸ Her own text, however, seeks not to decide which is more true—literature, psychoanalysis—but to unravel the complex problems involved in these very acts of reading. "What is undecidable," she concludes, "is precisely whether a thing is decidable or not" (p. 504).

We see here the movement away from the concept that has hitherto largely set the terms of the debates about psychoanalysis and literature, i.e. that of the literary object as set off against other bodies of knowledge or indeed against a world of other kinds of object. It is no accident that feminist film and literary critics have figured prominently in this move, since feminists have a stake in the critical project different from that of non-feminists: it matters to the feminist critic how "woman" is signified in dominant sign systems including literature and film, since that bears on who she is herself, on *how* she has come to be. The literary object is now seen not as essentially different from other objects but rather as displaying for the reader's contemplation and analysis (as well as enjoyment) linguistic systems that parallel those in life (or, perhaps we should call it, the "life-text"). The literary/film text embodies organizations of codes, signs, ideologies, and structural constraints not that dissimilar from those the reader experiences outside of reading. But the art-text allows these organizations to be seen more clearly than in the rush of the daily round. The

feminist critic, that is, has an investment in explaining female representations on both the level of individual experience (the social) and on the abstract theoretical level that posits a patriarchal system that works to position us in oppressive ways.

Given this journey from Freud to Lacan to Derrida—from Freudian to Lacanian psychoanalysis to deconstruction—in literary studies, what about film? How do psychoanalytic methods and the issues of reading intersect with this brief look at some literary moves? I have already noted that an historical game of tag is at work, whereby the two research areas leapfrog one another. Since film was slow to gain entrance in academia as a scholarly subject, there were no psychoanalytic film analyses during the forties when American psychoanalysts initiated the literary approach. Indeed, such approaches only appeared in film in the late sixties, and are in fact gaining more viability as I write.²⁹ If Raymond Durnat's 1968 psychoanalytic study of Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) represents the Freudian analysis of a film text, Donald Spoto's recent study of Hitchcock provides an example of a Freudian psycho-biography of a director.³⁰ (Interestingly enough, this work coincides with the belated emergence of a similar kind of psycho-biographic criticism within art history and music. Tied far more closely than literature and film historians to formalist, iconographic, symbol-motif, and archival historical methods, art and music historians discovered psychoanalysis only in the seventies and now seem to be treading a path similar to that in literary psychoanalytic studies, starting with the 1940s, but moving rapidly through the phases.³¹)

However, these Freudian film analyses have not been at the center of film research, if we judge that by the work represented in the leading academic film journals, in Ph.D. dissertations, and in papers presented at the Society for Cinema Studies (the single international academic film organization). For historical and other reasons—principally the intellectual movements in Britain in the wake of May '68—one dominant strand in film scholarship between (roughly) 1975 and 1985 developed its own complex paradigm that included psychoanalysis but that was not limited to this method. A complicated mixture of various kinds of thought—semiotics, post-structuralism, Russian Formalism, feminism, a Brechtian “politics of modernism,” Althusserian Marxism, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis—produced a set of approaches within a circumscribed frame in the influential British film journal, *Screen*. And, again for historical and cultural reasons too complicated to go into here, this paradigm became influential in American academic film departments at the same time that direct influence from French intellectual life was taking place, particularly through the Paris Film Program to which a number of the best American graduate students were drawn.

This complex intellectual paradigm is often referred to as “Lacanian

Film Theory," a label which in no way captures the many-sided and complex set of theoretical tools that were in fact involved. The label *does* correctly mark the interest in Lacan that preceded the later interest on the part of Anglo-American literary scholars; but it is an ironic labeling in that many Freudian concepts were central and only limited aspects of Lacanian thought were involved (i.e. the mirror phase, the distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the notion of the unconscious as "structured like a language," and the constitution of the subject as "split" at the moment of entry into language, which is also entry into lack/desire). What the label erases is the governing *ideological* basis in the paradigm, particularly in the sense of Althusserian Marxism. (Briefly, Althusser argued first that we are always in ideology; and second, that what he called the Ideological State Apparatuses in any culture embody and disseminate a dominant ideology that favors the ruling classes. Important here—despite its problems—is Althusser's attempt to link Lacan's model of subject-formation with the way we come to be subjects in ideology.)³²

Let me dwell on the original ideological emphasis in the *Screen* paradigm for a moment in that it was precisely the Althusserian British focus that was repressed in development of the paradigm in America. As a result of complex cultural/historical differences, Althusserian Marxism never gained any foothold in American intellectual life; Marxism in general has never had the dominance in the United States that it has had at periods in various European intellectual movements. Thus the original French thinkers, for whom some kind of Marxist-Socialism was often a given, and their British re-interpreters, for whom Althusserian Marxism was central, were further re-interpreted in the U.S. in line with America's governing apolitical intellectual modes. Baudry's apolitical theory of "the apparatus," inspired by Plato's cave-allegory (see below) dominated much USA work in film until Fredric Jameson's crucial interventions in the early 80s (and then film *per se* was not central).

Meanwhile, there was another interesting discrepancy between Britain and the U.S. in relation to psychoanalysis: Freudian psychoanalysis, as is well known, was always more appreciated here than in Britain and France, and in the Post World War II period entered popular discourses (women's magazines, films, and then television and child-care books). Part of the U.S. sixties movement in fact involved a reaction against this fifties popular neo-Freudianism that the sixties generation felt had distorted reality and warped the nuclear family. Sixties American feminism made rejection of Freudian thought a center piece,³³ since Freud was seen as responsible for sex-roles oppressive to women. Leftist movements, meanwhile, were anxious to establish their validity outside of popular Freudian theorizing that reduced all political activities to unresolved Oedipal issues.

It then came as no small surprise to scholars linked with the various sixties movements in America that the British were taking Freud so seriously, and also that they appeared to be newly discovering Freudian thought.³⁴ For while the Tavistock Institute in London has always been at the forefront of psychoanalytic work (it grew out of Ernst Jones's efforts, the formidable brief London presence of Freud himself, followed by Anna Freud's devotion to her father's name and work in her Hampstead Institute, and the debates with Melanie Klein), psychoanalysis has traditionally been marginalized in British intellectual and cultural life.³⁵ (Indeed, part of the reason that the British work focused primarily on the child [Klein, Winnicott, Bowlby] and on psychoses [as against neuroses] might have resulted from the resistance to work that would precisely link up with broader humanities interests.)

British popular culture significantly shows a surprising absence of the popularized Freudianisms that by contrast permeated American popular culture from 1945 on. British intellectuals in the mid-1970s thus came to psychoanalysis with a freshness untainted by prior negative associations that marked the American sixties generation. But there are other reasons why Lacanian psychoanalysis in particular seemed immediately relevant to analysis of representation in film: Lacan's theory of the mirror phase, for instance, readily lent itself to analogy with the screen-spectator situation in a way that did not happen in relation to literature. The different signifying systems of film and novel account in part for the different usage of Lacan. The *énoncé/enonciation* axis works differently in literature; it is not so easy for the fiction reader to believe that he/she is creating the text as it is for the cinema-spectator to believe that he/she is producing the images on the screen. For literary texts often insist on the narrational voice, which puts a certain distance between reader and text, or which at least mediates the dyad. In film, the spectator readily loses him or herself in the text as a result of classical cinema's suturing techniques.

Film theorists at this period argued that cinema and psychoanalysis have in common processes of constructing the subject and of the circulation of desire. Baudry's idealist and ahistorical theory of the "apparatus" linked the cinema to the scene of representation in Plato's cave, as well as with Freud and Lacan. The cinema-spectator is positioned by the cinematic apparatus (which involves the condition of the darkened room, the larger than life figures on the screen projected from behind the spectator's head, the methods of classical editing that "suture" the spectator into the filmic narrative, the filmic institution with its methods of exhibition and reception) so that there is a repetition of processes involved in the Lacanian "mirror phase" and the realm of the Imaginary. The structure of the Ideal-Imago, set in play during the mirror phase, is repeated in the process of watching a film whose specular regime permits this.

The seventies U.S. generation crowding into the newly expanded film Ph.D. programs were, by contrast with the sixties generation, quite open to psychoanalytic theories as they had been developed in both France and Britain. The orthodoxy (if one may call it that) of the *Screen* paradigm quickly dissolved once the work was disseminated in America. As always, American scholars were open to everything and held nothing sacrosanct: one could thus at any time find a healthy diversity of critical methods and paradigms being vigorously pursued in the growing number of American academic institutions granting advanced degrees, and in academic film journals.

The original *Screen* paradigm continued to attract scholars, and some of its lines of thought were continued in the important American journal, *Camera Obscura*, which particularly emphasized new feminist film theoretical approaches. But the paradigm was subjected to criticism, its basic assumptions questioned, and at present alternative kinds of criticism are increasingly evident in the journal. Psychoanalysis continues to be central in much film scholarship, but the ways in which the method is used are becoming increasingly diverse, as I hope is clear in the essays collected here.

What surfaces from this brief overview of the use of psychoanalysis in both literature and film scholarship is the issue of method and of disciplinary boundaries. We may well ask (as have many traditional scholars) what the implications are of critics trained to attend to the literary object delving so deeply into intricacies of psychoanalytic theories. Sometimes we sound like lay analysts or philosophers or social theorists rather than like researchers trained to deal with the aesthetic terrain. Sometimes, those of us wanting to use psychoanalysis in criticism, disagree with each other: Peter Brooks, for instance, has charged feminist critics with continuing a version of the long discredited thirties and forties practice (outlined above) of interpreting a text with psychoanalytic tools, "as if," Brooks says, "the identification and labeling of human relations in a psychoanalytic vocabulary were the task of criticism."³⁶ He goes on to charge feminist critics with performing "situational-thematic studies of Oedipal triangles, of the role of mothers and daughters, situations of nurture and bonding . . . ," and to note how "disquieting" this is.

Before I return to this issue, let me make some general points about new ways of thinking of the aesthetic sphere, and about the psychoanalytic method in film and literature. First, many recent critics (and particularly feminists) no longer subscribe to the notion of the aesthetic as a sphere entirely different from other linguistic or cultural spheres. The concept of the *text* (as an organization of language, codes, and signifying systems generally designed to produce meanings) and its *reader* (or interpreter) constituted both by prior cultural history and in the act of reading, are

now common in literary and film analysis. (The analysis of *why* the concept of the aesthetic has waned in the past twenty years or so lies beyond this introduction: but surely it has partly to do with reaction against the extremes of the New Criticism, with the inadequacy of disciplinary boundaries to deal with the pressing questions of our time, and with the failure of modernism to grow into something else.) Second, let me say something about the different usages of the psychoanalytic method in literary and film work both so as to provide a framework for the essays here and so as to discuss some of the implications of the psychoanalytic method raised by Peter Brooks above.

Three separate conceptions of psychoanalysis are already present in Freud's work: namely, psychoanalysis as a science, psychoanalysis as a medical practice (a "talking cure"), and psychoanalysis as a tool for analyzing literature and anthropological texts. For the most part, these three conceptions developed into three separate practices—that of the research scientist in academic psychology, that of the psychoanalyst curing patients, and that of the humanities scholar.

The distinctions I believe need making apply to this latter practice, namely that of the "humanities" scholar (whether s/he be in fact a practicing psychoanalyst or a university professor), in thinking about the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature. For, while psychoanalysis as a science has for obvious reasons not interfered with the humanities method, Freud's second conception—namely that of psychoanalysis as a *cure*—has entered in. There are then six aspects of psychoanalysis that need differentiating:

- 1) Psychoanalysis as a "talking" cure. This has two parts to it:
 - a) the analytic scene (the analysand on the couch, analyst in the chair, the analysand's speech, the analyst's interpretations, the affect in the relationship and other non-verbal bodily or aural signs, the imaginary relations, the transference, etc.);
 - b) the theory of human development (if one can call it that) found in Freud's basic concepts (the three phases the child moves through, the Oedipal scenario, the castration complex, defense mechanisms, penis-envy, projection/regression, etc.) and in Lacan's revision of these.
- 2) Psychoanalysis used to *explain* literary relationships, actions, motives, and the very existence itself of the text. This is the use of the method Freud initiated and that was developed largely by psychoanalysts; it is the method Brooks believes feminists are reviving, as noted above.
- 3) Psychoanalysis as *structurally* an aesthetic discourse. The main aesthetic category that has been applied to psychoanalytic practice and seen as linking it to the literary mode is narrative. The analyst

and the analysand are seen to construct “fictions” in the course of their interaction that are not that dissimilar from literary use of language. The dream has been one obvious sub-mode of the analytic scene that has links to the realm of fiction.

- 4) Psychoanalysis in a narrative discourse—used as the subject of literary or film texts. Scholars here study psychoanalysis as fictional *theme*, as it provides the narrative content of works about disturbed characters. (e.g. Pabst’s *Secrets of the Soul*, Hitchcock’s *Spellbound*, Morris West’s *The World is Made of Glass*, Judith Rossner’s *August*).
- 5) Psychoanalysis as an historical, ideological, and cultural discourse. Scholars here study how and when psychoanalysis entered into dominant cultural discourses. Feminists may analyze ways in which psychoanalysis as a discourse has been used to oppress women or to position them in specific ways, socially.
- 6) Finally, there is psychoanalysis as a specific process or set of processes, that the literary or film critic uses as a *discourse* to illuminate textual processes and reader/spectator positions vis-à-vis a text.

Humanities scholars interested in comparing the psychoanalytic exchange (analysand/analyst) with the literary exchange (text/reader) have focused on processes like transference central to the psychoanalytic exchange or on the constitution of the subject at the moment of entry into language in the Lacanian system. Film scholars have stressed the analogy between the spectator-screen situation and the child-mirror situation. In addition, they focus on issues of identification as that relates to the Imaginary/Symbolic axis.

As should be obvious, most of the theories discussed involve one or more of the various aspects of psychoanalysis. The point of detailing the distinct usages is not so much for the purpose of ruling any of them out as to argue for clarity of usage. For instance, some literary critics tend to collapse aspects 1 and 5: that is, they do not distinguish between psychoanalysis as a cure for neurosis (a quasi-medical practice) and psychoanalysis as a discourse used in critical analysis. As Skura aptly notes, “Analyst and poet are dealing with different aspects of human nature and different manifestations of the unconscious.”

Let me clarify what I mean by comparing briefly (in humanities research and psychoanalytic practice) the purpose of analysis, transference in the two situations, and the dream/text analogy. First, the narratives that the analysand creates/constructs on the couch and that the analyst helps her to refine, deepen, and clarify may have some structural/linguistic similarities to literary or film narratives, but the aim of their interpretation by both analysand and patient is different from the aim of the critic. The analyst is bent on interpreting what she hears with a view to making the

analysand well—the aim of moving through/beyond the pain the analysand feels and the interferences this pain produces in daily life. The analyst and analysand construct the narratives out of characters in the patient's life as an historical subject.

The aims of the analyst are strictly to help the patient—the analysis is in the service of a cure, even if it is also the analyst's livelihood; the critic, meanwhile, has a whole series of possible diverse goals, that range from professional enhancement to a search for "truth" (i.e., intellectual curiosity and debate) to aesthetic pleasure. Understanding herself and her culture may be important for the critic (and this, as we have seen, is certainly a motivation in feminist criticism), but it is an understanding sought under different conditions than those of the psychoanalytic patient.

It is significant that transference has been much discussed by literary critics but not by film scholars. Leaving aside for the moment the reasons for this (they are referred to briefly above), let me note some dis-ease with the easy use of the transference metaphor by literary critics. It is true that structurally there is a similarity between the task of the critic and the analyst: I particularly appreciate Brooks's suggestion that in both cases an exchange takes place within "an 'artificial' space—a symbolic and semiotic medium—. . . ." But I cannot agree with the rest of this sentence that proceeds ". . . that is none the less the place of real investments of desire from both sides of the dialogue" (p. 12–13). At least what needs to be made clear is that the nature of the "investments" is radically different, and also that the "dialogue" is of a dramatically other nature in the two situations. In psychoanalysis, the analysand's ego-identity, the elaborate construction of an illusory "self," is at stake: the speaking and listening has an intensity and immediateness to it quite other than in the reader-text "transference." Desire is elicited and in operation between analysand and analyst—it is being intensely communicated and discussed in the interpersonal interaction. And there is *actual* rather than metaphorical dialogue: words are passed back and forth in a manner that can never happen between text and reader, where the dialogue is internal, carried on by the critic alone.

In psychoanalysis, the transference is difficult to analyze and to move beyond. As Lacan notes, "The omnipotence of which we are always speaking in psychoanalysis is first of all the omnipotence of the subject as subject of the first demand, and this omnipotence must be related back to the Mother."³⁷ The Mother is, in Lacan's words, "the primordial subject of the first demand," and it is this first demand that enters into the psychoanalytic transference. Regressing to the pre-Oedipal phase, the analysand demands of the analyst the erotic love first experienced at the mother's breast in the oral stage. The painful discovery of this unsatisfied desire, displaced onto the body of the analyst, must be worked through,