

HAVE WE EXHAUSTED LACAN IN THE FIELD OF LITERARY CRITICISM?

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I have gathered from the letter inviting me to speak on this occasion that I am expected to respond to the following questions: Has Lacanian theory run out of steam? If it has, what new directions should we begin to think of? And, should the literary critic continue to engage with Lacanian thought?

The association of fields such as Gender Studies, Cultural Studies and above all Film Studies with Lacanian theory has been, in a word, profound. Three decades of close association certainly justifies the urgency to look beyond Lacan, going by one of Lacan's own comments in the *Television*: "Ten years is enough for everything I write to become clear to everyone" (1974, p 45). Since the impact of Lacan on literary criticism, though decisive, has been relatively recent and quite mild by comparison, it is impossible for me to assume the problem at stake from my position. There is another reason why such broad questions on Lacan should be difficult for us to answer. The conditions under which we must work include a glaring lack of books — even basic texts such as *Seminar III* or *Seminar VII* are hard to come by — a near complete absence of Lacan related journals, and our geographical distance from the nearest Lacanian clinic situated at Israel in the West and Australia in the East. Therefore, I shall primarily try to answer only the last question from the position of a Lacanian literary critic, which, I hope will provide an alternative scenario and thus problematise the one under scrutiny. Let me begin by answering the most important question: What have we done so far is Lacanian literary critics? Or, what are the important instances of Lacanian literary criticism?

II

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), teacher, theoretician and practitioner of clinical psychoanalysis, is not known to have had a high opinion of psychoanalytical literary criticism. This factor notwithstanding, Lacan loved to read literary works. Literature

made him think, reflect and invent. Between 1955 and 1976, in important addresses, in articles, in book reviews, and above all in his seminar, Lacan had spoken or written in reasonable detail on the works of such *littérateurs* as Poe (1955), Genet (1957-1958), Gide (1958), Shakespeare (1959), Sophocles (1955, 1960), Claudel (1960-1961), Sade (1962), Duras (1965), Joyce (1975-1976) and others. These literature-related works of Lacan have produced in turn a number of commentaries, such as, Muller and Richardson's work (1988) based on Lacan's seminar on Poe, Ragland-Sullivan's essays (1988) on Lacan's seminars on *Hamlet* and Joyce, Lee's appraisal (1990) of the seminars on Poe, *Hamlet* and *Antigone* in one of the chapters of his book on Lacan, Rabaté's (2001) exclusive assessment of all the 'literary' discourses of Lacan, to name the important instances. Notably, one of Rabaté's arguments is that, far from serving a secondary function, literary works had in fact influenced Lacan at certain important stages of the evolution of his system, especially development of the concepts of the 'letter' and the 'sinthome'. Whether due to the efforts of Lacan or not, Lacanian psychoanalysis and aspects of literature have been allowed to interact in a number of significant ways, especially since the 1970s, clearly in spite of Lacan's own position on psychoanalytical literary criticism. Not all these interactions, however, can be regarded as indisputable instances of Lacanian literary criticism.

To begin with, there are a number of book-length studies dealing with different kinds of literary, philosophical or cultural questions, in which, together with other issues, literary and Lacanian issues too have been raised and related to one another. The following works exemplify some of the important efforts in this area: Staten's (Henry Staten, *Eros in Mourning: Homer to Lacan*, 1995) study of the structure of mourning in European thinking, with reference to European literature, to the Gospel of John, and to some of the works of Plato and to aspects of Lacan. Wulf's (Catherine Wulf, *The Imperative of Narration: Beckett, Bernard, Schopenhauer, Lacan* 1996) study of the act of narration with reference to the works of Beckett, Bernard, Schopenhauer and Lacan; Grossman's (Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All things*, 1998) attempt to identify the conceptions of the self *vis-a-vis* historical action in the English Renaissance, in terms of sixteenth and seventeenth century English narrative poetry, some of the works of

Augustine and a number of works by Lacan; Bugliani's (Ann Bugliani, *The Instruction of Philosophy and Psychoanalysis by tragedy: Jacques Lacan and Gabriel Marcel Read Paul Claudel*, 1998) exploration of the intersection of tragedy, philosophy and psychoanalysis, and his comments on the teachings of tragedy with the support of the works of Claudel, Marcel and Lacan; Boheemen's (Christine van Boheemen, *Joyce, Derrida, Lacan and The Trauma of History*, 1999) examination of the relationship between Joyce's postmodern textuality and the traumatic history of colonialism in Ireland, taking into account, among other things, Joyce's influence on Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean philosophy. Butler's (Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, 2000) lectures on *Antigone*, too, should belong to this category. No doubt one or more strands of Lacanian thought have been allowed to implicate each of these works not just cursorily but in significant ways. However, the exploration of cultural or literary questions with which these works are primarily concerned, rarely take the form of literary criticism and often disregard the unconscious. Hence, it is perhaps inappropriate to use the term 'Lacanian' and the phrase 'literary criticism' unconditionally to describe any of these works.

Apart from these, there are certain works in which theoretical aspects of Lacanian psychoanalysis and aspects of literary theory have been read in terms of one another. Bowie, in his book *Freud, Proust and Lacan*, 1987, has tried to show how Lacanian psychoanalysis, especially in terms of Lacan's reasoning and the style of his speech and writings, is constantly dependent on literary elements. Chaitin, on the other hand, in a book called *Rhetoric and Culture in Lacan* (1996), has attempted to construct a Lacanian theory of poetry and to explore its relationship with Lacan's understanding of the subject and of historicity. These works are instances of literary readings of Lacanian theory and not instances of literary criticism or of Lacanian literary theory.

The works that fit the description better are the attempts made by Green (Andre Green, *The Tragic Effect: The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy*, 1979), Lukacher (Ned Lukacher, *Primal Scenes: Literature, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis*, 1986), Boheemen (Christine van Boheemen, *The Novel as Family Romance*, 1987), Lupton and Reinhard

(Julia Reinhard Lupton and Kenneth Reinhard, *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*, 1993), Armstrong (Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Visual Regime: Tragedy, Psychoanalysis and the Gaze*, 2000), Ingersoll (Earl G. Ingersoll, *D. H. Lawrence, Desire and Narrative*, 2001), Parkin-Gounelas (Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 2001), Halpern (Richard Halpern, *Shakespeare's Perfume: Sodomy and Sublimity in the Sonnets*, 2002) and others. In these works, however, literary texts have been read psychoanalytically, with reference not only to Lacan but also to other schools of psychoanalytical thought, as well as to aspects of non-psychoanalytical Western philosophy, which make them, in the final analysis, only partially Lacanian.¹

The works that can be described as instances of Lacanian literary criticism without any condition or further qualification have come from Chaitin (*The Unhappy Few: A Psychoanalytical Study*, 1972), Hanzo (*Paternity and Subject in Bleak House*, 1981), Brivic (*The Veil of Signs*, 1991), Cook (*Text into Flesh*, 1992), Leonard (*Reading Dubliners Again*, 1993), and Berressem (*Lines of Desire*, 1999) in the main. Let me mention in brief the subject matter of some of these works.²

In his book *The Unhappy Few: A Psychoanalytical Study of the Novels of Stendhal*, Gilbert D. Chaitin uses Lacanian thought to develop a psychoanalytical theory of narrative, and to study the relation of subjectivity to language, the psychoanalytic notions of identity in relation to language and culture, and other similar questions, in terms of 19th Century European literature, especially the works by Stendhal.

Thomas A. Hanzo has worked on Dickens using Lacan. According to Hanzo, many of Dickens' heroines are not only alienated from their own subjectivity but they have also undergone the splitting that brings into existence a chain of desired objects in the unconscious. Generally speaking, Hanzo's interest is in the fate of such heroines when they encounter a society in which paternity has failed. In the one work by Hanzo that I have been able to study closely, namely, 'Paternity and the Subject in *Bleak House*' (1981), Hanzo's focus is on the effect of marriage on the daughter's desire for her

father's love, with which the father himself is always forthcoming but to which the daughter never succumbs. Hanzo concludes his study stating, 'but contrary to her deepest feelings, the heroine...agrees to marry the paternal figure', and thus symbolically 'breaches the barrier of incest?'

Hanjo Berressem's *Lines of desire: Reading Gombrowicz's Fiction with Lacan* (1999), systematically analyzes all of Gombrowicz's novels using a primarily Lacanian framework. Each chapter in this book deals with a specific novel, always beginning with an outline of the plot and structure of the work and showing how each novel corresponds to the Lacanian categories of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. In a sense Berressem's book attempts to negotiate the dynamics of multiplicity in Gombrowicz's work, but, instead of perhaps trying to assemble the multiple perspectives on these works around certain key problems, Berressem poses a unity that nevertheless interweaves multiple approaches and conceptual frameworks. The quality and detail of his analyses, as well as his engagement with complex theoretical apparatus including, but not limited to, Lacanian theory, is highly sophisticated and productive. In the end Berressem's project opens up new perspectives to Gombrowicz as well as to Lacanian literary criticism. From the point of view of the latter, Berressem facilitates a number of productive and dynamic relations between text and theory.

In *The Veil of Signs* (1991), Sheldon Brivic has tried to construct a theoretical framework on perception and consciousness using Lacan's discourses on the gaze, the anchoring point in the elementary cell in Lacan's graph of desire and aspects of the mirror phase, and to study Joyce's works using this framework. His study led him to appreciate that perception and consciousness in Joyce take the form of loops of language that are sent out but return to the mind. This apart, with cursory references to Lacan's seminar on feminine sexuality, Brivic has opined that the genders in Joyce are structures of language.

Garry M. Leonard's *Reading Dubliners Again* (1993) is an achievement. Leonard has read Lacan's rethinking of human subjectivity and Joyce's short stories in the

Dubliners in terms of one another, sustaining the depth and complexity of both Joyce and Lacan till the very end. Leonard has read each text closely in separate chapters, and provided clear explications of the Lacanian terms and concepts used in the book.

Lacanian theory is discussed in these works usually as a prelude to the interpretation of the literary texts selected, or in order to clarify certain terms and concepts used in course of the interpretation. There is a set of works, however, that exclusively deals with Lacanian literary theory. The aim of such works is to formulate Lacanian theories of reading literature, or to indicate what the Lacanian critic must or must not do and why, and such matters. These works, too, must be taken into account in this study in order to get a clear picture of where Lacanian literary criticism stands, although these are evidently not instances of literary criticism *per se*. Some of the important theories of reading literature inspired by Lacanian thought have come from Johnson (Barbara Johnson, 'The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida', 1977), Felman (Shoshana Felman (ed.), *Literature and psychoanalysis*, 1977), Davis, (Robert Con Davis (ed.) *Lacan and narration: The Psychoanalytic difference in Narrative theory*, 1983) and Wright (Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic criticism: theory in Practice*, 1984).

Two points stand out when the works selected as instances of Lacanian literary criticism are taken together. First, that full-length critical works produced in this area are still few in number. This is a point made or stressed in almost all the works cited, and in one of them a complete list of the work done in this area is produced in a single paragraph. And second, that these works have started to appear only since the early 1990s. Let us highlight some of the important lessons learnt from these works, and point out a few recurrent problems in the handling of Lacanian theory in some of them, as well as in some of the other works I have described as partially Lacanian. For the sake of brevity, let me raise the problems and address them not with reference to the textual details but in a general way.

Regarding the theoretical texts, it must be said that the works of Johnson and Felman had laid down some of the ground rules. Using Poe's story 'The Purloined

Letter', Lacan's seminar on the story, Derrida's critique of Lacan's seminar and her own reading of these three texts, Johnson showed us how the self is invariably implicated in the act of reading, and therefore while deconstructing textual hierarchies why the reader ought to deconstruct the excess produced by himself or herself in the course of doing so. Felman, on the other hand, began from the premise that literature and psychoanalysis were different from one another and yet 'enfolded within' one another, and argued that a dialogue between literature and Lacanian psychoanalysis that shared an 'undecidable border' was necessary, for, only in terms of a dialogue could the possibilities and limits of the enterprise be questioned and any hierarchical relationship between the two disciplines deconstructed.

Wright's extremely useful account of the different schools of psychoanalytical theories beginning with Freud, however, has not done justice to Lacanian theory on one or two counts. Let me focus on one of the problems that is present in different forms in a number of the other works too. While discussing the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders separately together, a number of authors have abided by the assumption that the Imaginary order is autonomous and never implicated by the Symbolic order until the former is replaced by the latter in course of the subject's maturation. Had that indeed been the case, Lacan would not have described the ego as a prey that is captured in the network of signifiers from its very birth. This simplistic premise correspondingly led to the simplistic description of the child's structuration in and by the Oedipus complex as his / her loss of the object that henceforth becomes a signifier of desire in the unconscious. In Lacan, however, the object from which the child is finally separated and split in the third and last stage of the Oedipus complex is not one that the child possessed prior to his/ her being dispossessed by paternal prohibition. Rather, this object in Lacan is from the very outset inaccessible. In other words, that which is prohibited in the Oedipus complex is already an impossible object of desire; hence prohibition only introduces the pathogenic bent to an already existing structure of neurosis.

In certain works, the authors have attributed different forms of power to the male subjects — at times without stating it — thus indicating, deliberately or inadvertently,

that the woman, by contrast, is 'barred'. Such simplistic notion of gender is inconsistent with the Lacanian theory of the subject. In Lacan, it is not merely the woman who is barred. It is more radically the subject itself that is barred. So femininity only makes explicit what is implicit; that is, a formal emptiness that constitutes the subject of the signifier in Lacan where the signifier represents a subject for another signifier.

In this context, one must give due credit to Leonard for his refreshing approach to Joyce. After clarifying that while sex is natural, gender is an ideological construct, he went on to develop a Lacanian theory of the male subject that exposes him and his pathetic symbolic allegiance to the phallus quite thoroughly. In Leonard's own words, to challenge the male cultural hegemony "requires... equally an examination of the masculine gender because one cannot fully understand the desperate origin of the coercive patriarchal forces that insist women must masquerade as worshippers of the Phallic symbol (i.e., masquerade as feminine), unless one understands the integral fraudulence of this symbol of self-sufficient authority that requires something Other (the symptom of 'The Woman') to permit the masculine subject to believe in it." This stand is further problematized in terms of an enviably thorough reading of the *Dubliner*.

After reading this book, any student of Lacan will wonder why an author who has been so meticulous in his treatment of theory and his handling of analysis, had only dealt with the idea of 'femininity as masquerade' and not introduced some of the other important aspects of feminine sexuality in Lacan, such as, desire, the different *jouissances* — especially the one that Lacan termed 'supplementary jouissance', or the ineffable jouissance beyond the phallus, which only women experience — and the interrelations between these. The question as to why Leonard has not used Lacan's Seminar XX in his work is unavoidable, given that this seminar had been published way back in 1975. In fact, this problem is consistent in Lacanian Joyce criticism, because neither Leonard nor Brivic has taken Lacan's *Seminar XX* seriously in spite of going close to it or even touching upon it.

In some of the analyses of important female constructs, the concerned authors have expressed or hinted at forms of fulfillment of desire in reality, especially with reference to her state at the end of the work. This is inconsistent with Lacan's teachings on hysteria which is clearly the structure of these constructs. According to Lacan, the condition of desire for the hysteric is that first, desire is the desire of the Other, and second, that the hysteric can sustain her desire only as that which cannot bear fruition in reality. So, in literary works, some sacrificial economy or the other is usually introduced in the plot in order to sustain her lack. If the plot nears fruition then the onus of the desire will have to move from reality to the Real. To use one of Zizek's examples, exactly at the point where the Leonardo di Caprio character named Jack drowns in the *Titanic*, that is to say moves from the realm of reality into the realm of the Real, that the Kate Winslet character named Rose can assume her desire for him.

III

In this section let me address the questions stated at the beginning of the paper. One must begin with the clarification that Lacanian literary criticism ought to be placed within the tradition of psychoanalytical literary criticism, instead of being studied in isolation. In fact, the type of literary criticism we commonly call 'psychoanalytical' predates Lacan by a long way, thanks mainly to the efforts of Freud (from 1905 to 1928), Rank (1909, 1912), Jones (1910-1949), Bonaparte (1933) and others from the core group of psychoanalysts, as well as to the enthusiasm of a large number of literary critics attracted to psychoanalysis in theory.³

Freudian literary criticism, largely due to the lead provided by Freud and the members of his coterie, succumbed, in different ways, to the lure of the allegory trap, and, usually ended up reducing literary works, at times forcefully, to a sexual terminology. There is hardly any exaggeration in the remark that a Freudian literary critic tended to discover a phallus at every lamppost. At the very least, Lacan's seminar on the other hand compels the critic to be far more precise with his ideas and their expressions than that. The word 'mother' alone, for example, was enough for Freud to explain the

different parts that the figure of the mother played in a child's Oedipus complex. In Lacan, however, there is always the additional detail — the mother must be Real, Imaginary, Symbolic, or, the complex term '(m)Other', which Lacan had gladly accepted from the English language as a gift.

The penchant for precision in Lacan's works has larger connotations in the context of this paper. Lacan had not discovered Lacanian psychoanalysis in a flash; it had gradually evolved over a period of time. If we consider Lacan's Seminar (1953-1980) alone, we are dealing with a system of thought that was constructed, deliberately unsystematically, over a period of 27 years; moving from the opposition between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, through an exhaustive exploration of the Symbolic, to a close study of the Real order, devoting almost a decade to each phase. The example of the development of one Lacanian term, '*objet petit a*', is all I have the time for in order to give an idea of how concepts were constructed over a period of time rather than defined at one go.

The algebraic sign 'a' standing for the '*objet petit a*' was introduced by Lacan in 1955 to denote the imaginary other of the ego. At that stage, insofar as 'a' stood for the specular counterpart of the ego and was interchangeable with the ego, it was not truly an 'other'. Around 1957 Lacan started to regard the '*objet petit a*' as the object of desire in the big Other, and from 1963 on, he considered it not as the object which desire wanted to attain but as the very cause of desire, calling it the 'object-cause'. Notably, there are four part-objects in Lacan which correspond with the four partial drives. The concept of the '*objet petit a*' underwent further refinement throughout the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, with connotations of 'surplus enjoyment (*plus-de-jouir*) and of 'semblance of being' being added to it. Finally, in 1974, Lacan situated the '*objet petit a*' at the intersection of the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic orders, thereby giving it a central place in his philosophy. The '*objet petit a*' is especially significant in Lacan as a route to the Other, for, it is around the object that the subject's specific relationship with his desire of the Other is captured in his fantasy structure, the latter being that which at once sustains the subject's desire and the subject himself/ herself in his/her desire. .

In order to be able to regard Lacan as dated, one must first confront and resolve three special problems: First, psychoanalysis, unlike many of the other systems of thought we are concerned with, is fundamentally a clinical field. The unconscious of the analysand can be invoked and studied in its purest form in the analyst's chamber alone. Although this point is often ignored in the fields of cultural studies and film studies — both these fields have also tended to ignore the literary element in Lacan — there is no denying the fact that virtually every remark by Lacan is intended to throw light on either the analyst or the structure of the neurosis, the perversion or the psychosis, for the benefit of, especially, the trainee analysts. Hence, new psychoanalytical theories must come from the clinic and not from the university. Those who work with psychoanalytical theories from outside the clinic may offer new theories of psychoanalytical literary criticism, but, notably, these theoretical formulations must necessarily, fundamentally and consistently depend on the theories of at least one of the major clinical analysts, such as a Freud, a Klein or a Lacan.

Second, Freud's writings were clearly regarded as dated by the mid-1940s. But in terms of his call to return to Freud around 1953, Lacan has not only made us read Freud once again from the beginning, but also established why every student of psychoanalysis must begin by reading the primary texts of Freud. This point is explained by the eminent Lacanian Bruce Fink thus:

One of the paradoxes of the kind of field that psychoanalysis is, is that - unlike a field such as physics, in which physicists need never read the original texts written by Newton, Maxwell, Lorenz, or Einstein, learning all they need to know in order to 'do' or 'practice' physics by reading ordinary textbooks or simply by going to classes — in psychoanalysis, Freud's texts remain unsurpassable, indispensable reading... It is not as if later work in the field could somehow subsume all of Freud's contributions and

pass them on in the form of a series of formulas that anyone could learn and use (Pink, 2002: *Reading Seminar XX*, p 33).

In this respect, the status of the primary psychoanalytical works is somewhat similar to the status of the primary works in the field of literary studies. A curriculum of English literature that includes Bradley and excludes Shakespeare is equally inconceivable.

Third, before replacing Lacan by some other system or systems of thought, we ought to answer the following question: Have we read the Lacanian system closely enough? The answer must be 'no', for close to half of Lacan's seminars have yet to be published in any language. To the best of my knowledge, out of the proposed 28 books, only 15 have been published so far.⁴ Eleven seminars are unpublished till date, and two other Seminars, VI and XXV have been published only in part.⁵ Which means a large section belonging to the middle years is missing. Given that the publication of each new Seminar has so far offered us something new and significant, has given scholars the reason to think that they have rediscovered Lacan, and, has led to the production of a mass of fresh critical writings in different fields, there is no reason to assume that we can safely ignore the works by Lacan that have not been published so far. There is certainly an element of risk involved in being selective with a psychoanalyst who is so esoteric and yet so precise.⁶ True, we have excellent biographies, bibliographies, dictionaries, studies giving brief accounts of all of Lacan's works, unauthorized fragments of unpublished seminars, people who have attended the Seminar, and, above all, the texts of the final years of the seminar. But I think I have already indicated why it would be inappropriate to substitute these for Lacan's Seminar.

Lacan's son-in-law, Jacques-Alain Miller, on whom rests the onus of producing the texts out of the stenography, claims that it is a difficult job and believes that no one else can be entrusted with even a part of it. Miller is perhaps right in thinking and saying so. The only point I have failed to understand is how, going by his own admission, he

could produce the first draft of *Seminar XI* in one month, and that too as a greenhorn in Lacan's Seminar!

Instead of debating whether or not Lacan is dated, the psychoanalytical literary critics must, at the very least, complete the modest list of assignments pending at this stage. The list should include a close, sustained and systematic Lacanian reading of all those *littérateurs* who had been influenced by Freud and psychoanalysis, such as, W H. Auden, Thomas Mann, Eugene O'Neill, and the like, and all those *littérateurs* whom Freud or Lacan had written on in some detail, such as Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky and the others already mentioned. There are of course other interesting projects too, whose completion may throw significant light on certain important literary works as well as on certain aspects of Lacanian theory. To cite one instance here, the sexual relation between the genders in Lawrence's fiction may be studied by invoking the Lacanian notion of the impossibility of the sexual relation or rapport between man and woman from *Encore*. The theoretical framework may deal with the incompatibility of the fantasy structure that mediates the relationship between the man and the woman, which desubjectivises the woman by reducing her to a part object in his fantasy structure, that is, to a symptom. It is this reduction to the object that the hysterical woman resists since she knows that a man can only love a woman insofar as she can sustain his fantasy (that sustains him by veiling his lack in the Other). The hysteric would rather sustain the desire of or for the father as a condition of impossibility.

References:

1. The two books that are more often than not wrongly regarded as Lacanian studies of literature are as follows: First, Ben Stoltzfus's *Lacan and Literature. Purloined Pretexts* (1996). Stoltzfus has avowedly tried to read what is concealed within the figurative language of literature, using Lacan's *Seminar XI*, a part of *Seminar II*, and *Ecrits*, and a few works by Lawrence, Hemingway, Camus and others for the purpose. Although the approach of the author, both in method and in direction, is completely Freudian, instead of using suitable classical Freudian terms, such as primal repression, Oedipal wish, castration, bliss and so on that the work clearly demanded, he has resorted to Lacanian terms without providing any Lacanian theoretical comments on them. The aim of Stoltzfus may have been to indicate the theoretical rigour but there is no doubt that the

involvement of Lacan in this work is nothing but ornamental. Therefore, this book is a good example of Freudian reading of literature masquerading as Lacanian. Second, *Using Lacan Reading Fiction* by James Mellard (1991), which explores literary works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James and Virginia Woolf. The two major problems with Mellard's work are his over-dependence on secondary works in the discussions on Lacan — in spite of the mention of the large number of titles by Lacan in the bibliography — and his over-dependence on the analysis of characters and psychological studies of themes. Though the book is interesting in many respects, in the final analysis it would be inappropriate to regard it as an example of Lacanian literary criticism.

2. I have not been able to lay my hands on Méira Cook's book entitled *Text into flesh: a lacanian reading of selected short stories by I.B. Singer* (1992), because it is out of print for quite some time now.
3. By 1910, for instance, apart from his comments on *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet* in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), and a short analysis of a story by Ferdinand Meyer in 1898, Freud had written the long essays 'Psychopathic characters on the stage' (1905-1906), 'Delusions and dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' (1906-1907), and 'Creative writers and day-dreaming' (1907-1908). Otto Rank had completed *The Myth of the birth of the Hero* (1909), and Ernest Jones had written his long essay on Oedipus and Hamlet (1910). Thus, an interest in psychoanalytical theories among literary critics was well established long before Lacan read a story by Edgar Poe in his seminar before a group of trainee analysts and others in 1955.
4. These are Seminar I, II, III, IV, V, VII, VIII, XI, XVII, XX, XXII, XXIII, XIV, XXV and XXVII.
5. The eleven unpublished seminars are Seminar IX, X, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVIII, XIX, XXI and XXVI.
6. An eminent British psychoanalyst from the object relation school had said in a presentation made in Jadavpur University that, one of the glaring omissions in Lacan's system is the concept of 'affect'. I understand from Roberto Harari's notes on the as yet unpublished *Seminar X* devoted to 'anxiety', that Lacan gave a central place to the concept of affect that year. Harari's book gives me the impression that the complete *Seminar X* is likely to begin to explain clearly the trajectory of Lacan's theoretical progress from desire to jouissance, which is no doubt indispensable for our better understanding of these two well-known concepts.