

W O M E N

I N F R A N C E, E N G L A N D,

A N A L Y Z E

& T H E U N I T E D S T A T E S

W O M E N

■

ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH

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■

Dominique Guyomard • Monique David-Ménard
Joyce McDougall • Monique Schneider
Catherine Millot • Françoise Petitot
Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel • Diana Trilling
Julia Kristeva • Dinora Pines • Donna Bassin
Luce Irigaray • Juliet Mitchell • Enid Balint
Dorothy Dinnerstein • Jessica Benjamin
Hanna Segal • Marianne Eckardt • Muriel Dimen

Women Analyze Women

*In France, England, and
the United States*

*Elaine Hoffman Baruch and
Lucienne J. Serrano*



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***To all the analysts and writers who are
restoring women's voices to culture***

Preface

There are many people we would like to thank for their help in this book. First, the analysts themselves for graciously revising material and checking our translations where possible. Holmes and Meier Publisher (30 Irving Place, N.Y., N.Y.) for granting us permission to reprint the interview with Luce Irigaray, which originally appeared in *Women Writers Talking* (1983). *Partisan Review*, in which a short form of the Julia Kristeva interview appeared under the name of E.H.B. (1984/1). Jill Duncan, librarian at the British Psychoanalytic Institute, for her helpful suggestions, and Brom Anderson, who translated the Kristeva interview.

With the exception of the Julia Kristeva interview and the Joyce McDougall interview, which was done in English, all of the

interviews of the French analysts were translated by us. In our editing, we have tried to retain the quality of the speaking voice and the style of the analyst in all of the interviews, whether originally in English or French.

In the bibliography which accompanies each interview, we have listed books chronologically according to the original date of publication. In cases where an English translation was available, we listed only the reference for the English translation and not the original title.

We would like to thank our editor, Kitty Moore, at NYU Press, for her warmth and comforting presence, Despina Gimbel, our manuscript editor, for her painstaking work, and Grace Hernandez and Jitka Salaguarda for their efficiency.

We are also indebted to those who helped us contribute *our* voices to culture. E.H.B. would like to thank Dr. J. A. Mazzeo and Dr. Alice Stahl for their generous encouragement; her parents, who believed that a woman should have a career of her own; and Greg, her son and astute critic. L.J.S. would especially like to thank Professor Germaine Brée, who introduced her to psychoanalysis and feminism, and Dr. Ruth Velikovsky Sharon for her constant support.

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**Elaine Hoffman Baruch
Lucienne J. Serrano**

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Introduction

This book grew out of our conviction that there is a new form of psychoanalysis causing a quiet revolution, an analysis that is centered on women as seen by women. This, however, does not mean that a single point of view is represented here. Rather, there are multiple subjects and multiple voices in France, England, and the United States. In traveling from one side of the Atlantic to the other, we focused our interviews on the questioning of basic principles of psychoanalytic thought with the very people who are in the process of changing that thought.

Because women's voices are multiple (and combine different registers) and because psychoanalysis has so often been enriched by different disciplines, we have often turned to psychoanalysts

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who are also experts in other fields. For example, one of our English psychoanalysts, Dinora Pines, was originally a dermatologist. The American analyst Muriel Dimen is also an anthropologist. The French analyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel was a political scientist. Several, such as Monique David-Ménard and Monique Schneider, were trained as philosophers. Here too are literary critics such as Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. We have turned also to analysts in different fields whose strong interest in psychoanalysis has informed their writing, such as the cultural critic Diana Trilling and the psychologist Dorothy Dinnerstein. All of them wish to give women a voice of their own freed of male parameters.

The reader might ask why we have chosen the interview format. After all, we might have reprinted essays, asked for new ones, or written our own about the work of these germinal authors. Yet the immediacy of the interview situation in some way replicates the analytic hour in that it can bridge conscious and unconscious and make manifest what is latent. The interview is a genre that is intermediary between thinking and writing. It catches thought on the wing. Like some modernist and postmodernist literature, it makes the process of creation itself part of its content.

The term *interview* comes from the French term *entrevoir*, meaning to see, to catch a glimpse of, in the sense of both to understand and to perceive. We feel that seeing the analyst in her environment is very important. That is why we describe where the initial interview took place, which is often also the analytic space or the analyst's workplace. (These places ranged from palazzi to monastic cells.) We also sometimes describe how the analyst looks, for we feel that to ignore appearance for fear of being charged with reducing women to objects is to deny an aspect of women in their particularity as subjects. (We feel the same way about men.) We also think that the interviewers should be heard as well as the respondents, for we believe that one may indirectly influence the formation of theory by asking the appropriate questions. The interview represents both thought and voice, many voices, what Mikhail Bakhtin calls *heteroglossia*, but it does

so in an informal way. Process, fluidity, reconciliation of opposites, open-endedness, uncovering, sharing—such is the interview, at least as we have conducted it. We were not interested in cross-examination but rather in interpersonal discovery, what Jean Baker Miller calls the “self-in-relation.” As we envisage the interview, it is in fact a new form, that of the conversational essay.

Interviews can also be part of a support system, more important to some analysts than others. Some of the more marginal and original figures in France and the United States often feel isolated, and have told us that they sometimes feel as if they are working in a vacuum. Much of their most exciting work is done in solitude, and sometimes they feel unheard by their colleagues. Though many of our analysts are internationally known, some brilliant theoreticians are not. They were excited to find that women in foreign countries are interested in their work.

Still, at the same time that the interview can be a support, it is also a challenge that may be seen as a threat. Although the analysts welcomed our questions, they said they had never thought of some of them before. They may thus be engaged in the process of formulating new theory, which may also involve self-discovery. There is no question that biography influences theory and the interview helps to disclose this connection, which is sometimes seen as too revealing. Some respondents demand the power to edit and change their words. Once said, however, the words in some sense are indelible and will affect the analyst's future thinking even if they are erased from the transcription before publication. The first interview was only the beginning of a process that often included other meetings, lengthy transcriptions, authors' additions and revisions, by way of transatlantic phone calls and correspondence, and our translating and editing.

We see these interviews as a transatlantic bridge, a way of bringing ideas from one country to another as they are being formulated. But we also hope that these interviews will be of interest to a general as well as specialized audience. The interview format is a way of democratizing theory, not through simplification but through a different mode of presentation from the usual professional paper with its heavy apparatus. Personal and inti-

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mate, the interview cuts across barriers and boundaries and desacralizes the text, in many cases allowing us to hear the speaking voice of the analyst.

Happy as we are with the people represented here, unfortunately we were not able to see everyone we wanted to. Sometimes the analyst's own life story took her away: there were children to care for, conferences to attend, book deadlines to meet, the uncertain situation of old bodies if not minds, opposition to interviews themselves—or to the “feminist” scene. Try as we could, we were not able to convince some that we were not writing the radical feminist bible. More often than not, however, we met with kindness and generosity.

We may not have wanted to cross-examine the analysts, but during the preinterview sessions, we read their works as if we were about to take examinations ourselves. From early morning to night, we sat in the Bibliothèque Nationale, our refuge for more reasons than one. It is the only place in France, seemingly, where one must smoke outside. (We had been smoked out of a psychoanalytic conference in the elegant Trocadero section where we very much wanted to remain; brilliant analyst Monique Schneider was surrounded by so many fumes that she looked like Joan of Arc at the stake, a fitting image, considering her controversial position.) At the Bibliothèque we surrendered our identity cards at the narrow entranceway in exchange for a numbered plaque. We then proceeded with our book slips to the control desk, a high and forbidding fortress, where we surrendered our plaque with our slips. Then we went stealthily to our numbered and unchangeable seats, where we were surrounded by rows of French and foreign researchers—many of them Americans, all with piles of books in the close rows. In contrast to the confinement of our narrow spaces was the grandeur of the murals on the walls and ceilings in the two huge reading rooms, one with a large dome.

In some ways, the contrast here at the BN between narrow work space and visual grandeur is similar to that of New York's Forty-second Street Library (where we did some of our work on the American analysts), with its magnificent windows, enormous ceilings, and crowded desks. But since the Forty-second Street is

a library of equality where all may enter, unlike the BN where one pays and is subject to screening, one finds the homeless, the onanists, the newspaper flippers, the sleepers in danger of being awakened abruptly by a guard, as well as the scholars who try to create and hide in a little corner of their own.

Like the BN, the British Museum is a beautiful enclave of elitism. And the British Psychoanalytic, a model of decorum and peace, is far lovelier in its Georgian house than the New York Psychoanalytic, for example. Freud's home in the London suburb of Hampstead, where he came for asylum with Anna Freud before the war, was opened in the summer of 1986 as a museum and library for scholars. His psychoanalytic couch from Vienna is here, a massive Victorian piece with thick pillows and lavish rugs on it. One can hardly control oneself from sinking into it. It is an invitation to fantasy, unlike some of the spare, skinny, monochrome Spartan cots that we see in many psychoanalytic offices today.

SOME NATIONAL DIFFERENCES

It is Jacques Lacan, with his emphasis on the phallus and the Oedipal, who has been the central influence in France, even for those who attack him. In contrast, it is Melanie Klein, with her emphasis on the pre-Oedipal and object relations, who is central in England. Her follower D. W. Winnicott has also been remarkably influential in his theory of the good-enough mother. In the United States, Freud is still the central figure in the major psychoanalytic circles, but Kohut, Kernberg, and Spotnitz, with their emphasis on the pre-Oedipal and narcissism, are recognized in court also, although some women thinkers find them too concerned with fragmentation and splitting. Whereas object-relations analysts on both sides of the Atlantic are optimistic about people achieving both a sense of self and a gratifying relationship, Lacan and his followers speak of a decentered self and a state of desire.

We might raise the question why Lacan in his rereading of Freud has had such great appeal for psychoanalysts in France and for literary critics here. His immense culture and knowledge of

literature, linguistics, mathematics, and philosophy made him a figure of great intellectual charisma. But why, we might add, has he appealed to women when his analysis is so rigorously phallogocentric? Perhaps it is because he made a distinction between the symbolic phallus, which represents power, and the factual penis. Nobody has the phallus, according to Lacan. (The problem as we see it, however, is that since the phallus as metaphor is related to the penis, it privileges that organ.)

Though it sometimes turns to Klein and Winnicott, in general, French analysis does not look to American psychoanalysis for inspiration. However, American analysts of the more subversive variety and even more so American literary critics are looking across the ocean to what they often see as their intellectual mothers and fathers. Nonetheless, Americans still think of themselves as pioneers and engage in new ideas without a conscious sense of rebellion. Though there are cultural bonds, there are important differences in psychoanalysis that we witnessed on both sides of the Atlantic in: (1) the representations of the pre-Oedipal mother, (2) perspectives on gender and sexual difference, (3) attitudes toward and conceptions of feminism, (4) the problematics of language, (5) phallic symbolism and its alternatives.

In our interviews, we found ourselves facing a central difference between the highly theoretical "avant garde" psychoanalysts in France and the more pragmatic, empirical English ones, known for their clinical expertise. We call "avant garde" that brilliant and revolutionary group, most of them women, all of them writers, such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Monique Schneider, all of them influenced by Jacques Lacan, whether in support or rebellion against him, all having a grounding in literature and philosophy. Juliet Mitchell has similarities with this group even though she is based in England and is considered a member of the Independent School there. Of the other English analysts represented here, the great Kleinian is Hanna Segal. Dinora Pines belongs to the B group, the Anna Freudians, and Enid Balint to the Independents.

Equally striking in different ways are our other French analysts: Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel (a pronounced anti-Lacanian) and Joyce McDougall (who was originally in training with Anna Freud) are

well known in this country. Of the others, Monique David-Ménard, Dominique Guyomard, Catherine Millot, and Françoise Petitot range from moderate to extreme Lacanians.

The American psychoanalysts we interviewed range from Karen Horney's daughter Marianne Eckardt, who was much influenced by the interpersonal school, to the feminist psychoanalysts Donna Bassin, Jessica Benjamin, and Muriel Dimen, who are in the forefront of creating new theory, as indeed has been psychologist Dorothy Dinnerstein, author of the highly influential *Mermaid and the Minotaur*, an examination of our destructive gender arrangements.

THE PRE-OEDIPAL MOTHER: POWER AND GENDER

Both Anglo-American object-relations analysts and the French theorists emphasize the pre-Oedipal mother (neglected by Freud and by Lacan also). However, we are struck by the attention to the so-called archaic, dangerous mother, that overwhelming abyss that threatens us in some (although not all) of the French analysts, a concept that goes far beyond Melanie Klein's concept of the good and bad mother in its possibilities for terror. For too many feminists, this will sound uncomfortably close to the devouring female creatures so familiar to us in Western mythology, such as Medusa and the Furies. The American analysts we interviewed—and even the English—see the mother in much more realistic terms.

One of our objectives was to question whether the decoding of traditional psychoanalysis in France through a new emphasis on the pre-Oedipal mother doesn't lead us in fact to a neomisogyny, in which the new subtext confirms the old misogynous text. One of our central questions to the analysts was how they work their way through this apparent confirmation of the patriarchy to a further decoding. Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel has pointed out that though myth may negate reality, it often expresses desire, something we cannot deny, however much we might wish to. (Merely recognizing it, however, may help change behavior, we feel.) Monique Schneider speaks of the multiple representations of the mother in both the conscious and the unconscious. She denounces

the reductionism of the official views of culture and advocates a greater place for all the facets of the repressed.

While object-relations theorists in this country, such as Nancy Chodorow in her highly influential book *The Reproduction of Mothering*, pasteurize the unconscious and speak of the need for individuation in reasonable terms as the cause for both the little girl and the little boy's turning away from the mother to the father, some French theorists (such as Chasseguet-Smirgel, Irigaray, Kristeva, and Schneider) have a much more dramatic account of sexual difference. In their scenario, the father symbolizes all legitimate power while the mother represents either an engulfing abyss or a soft, smooth, visceral paradise.

While object-relations theorists imply that changing social structure would redistribute the allocation of power between the sexes, many of the French feel that the elimination of gender differences would lead to psychosis. As Muriel Dimen points out, this may be because the French conflate self/other differences, which everyone agrees must be recognized in order not to fall into psychosis, with gender differences. It may be also that since the French term for gender and genre (distinct form) is the same, they are more likely to recognize and to perpetuate differences. In addition, the French have a long tradition of intellectual women in spite of or perhaps because of strong gender differentiation. No matter how brilliant the woman, she was not seen as a threat, provided she had charm and elegance. American women do not have such a history of *vive la différence*. On the whole, the Americans we interviewed were much more optimistic about changing gender roles. The pioneer mentality is still alive and well on the Eastern seaboard, and no doubt on the Western one as well.

FEMINISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

But despite their attention to women's psychological status, their denouncing of women's reification through male domination, and their wanting to give women the position of subjects, not all of the analysts we interviewed call themselves feminists. We were surprised at the level of negation, the opposition to the term, especially in Europe, but to some extent here also.

For some writers, like Luce Irigaray in France, feminism is simply another “ism,” a term modeled on “the other great words of the culture that oppress us.” For others, the word carries an antimale connotation, even a hatred of men, and always a rejection of them to which they object. Some analysts, such as Enid Balint in England, worry about the capacity of feminism to oppress men. A view less directed toward men, such as that of Diana Trilling in this country, holds that feminism is sometimes objectionable because it is an ideology and like all ideology sacrifices truth to a cause. Even some who are comfortable with the term here understand the opposition, claiming that society has co-opted some of the principles of feminism and has therefore deradicalized it. Interestingly enough, there are those who reject the term, such as Marianne Eckardt in this country, whom we would classify as having affinities with radical feminists in that they are open to all kinds of new parenting and family arrangements.

It may be that the term *feminism* is both too limited and too large a term. Certainly it arouses all kinds of passions, both negative and positive. However, for want of a more exact word, we find ourselves using it as a kind of shorthand. To Freud’s question, “What do women want?”—which has perhaps earned him more abuse than any of his formulations except that of penis envy—the analysts here might answer: “an equal place in culture,” something that goes well beyond the principle of equal pay for equal work. This is, to us, certainly a type of feminism.

There are, of course, many forms of feminism, and they must be distinguished. We are here concerned with three major directions and their connections with psychoanalysis. Although terms vary, these are sometimes referred to as liberal, cultural, and metaphysical feminism. Simone de Beauvoir may be called the chief exemplar of liberal feminism, which holds that the male view of the world is the human view and that women should subscribe to it as much as possible. Though Beauvoir ostensibly rejected psychoanalysis, this form of feminism perpetuates the binary system supported by traditional analysis, which holds that the essential difference is the sexual one. Traditional analysis gives primacy to the Oedipal stage, the moment at which sexual differ-