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Laurence A. Rickels. *Nazi Psychoanalysis, Vol. 1: Only Psychoanalysis Won the War.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. x + 300 pp. $54.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8166-3697-6.

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On Healing and Hailing: Laurence A. Rickels's <cite>Nazi Psychoanalysis</cite>

On Healing and Hailing: Laurence A. Rickels's *Nazi Psychoanalysis*

This complex study traces the disquieting conjuncture of psychoanalysis, Nazism and modernity into the twenty-first century and back to WWI. Rickels, who is an unorthodox academic scholar of German and comparative literature as well as a psychotherapist, starts from the contention that the era of Nazi psychoanalysis is largely absent from contemporary accounts of modernity. What is missing, Rickels argues, is the uncanny continuity between one of the most progressive sources of modernity (psychoanalysis) and what we take to be the biggest symptom in the category of aberration and discontinuity (National Socialism). Rickels thus challenges the assertion recently reiterated by psychologists James and Eileen Goggin that the history of psychoanalysis in the Third Reich represents a sharp discontinuity in the history of the discipline.[1] Instead, he takes the pioneering scholarship of Geoffrey Cocks, Ulfried Geuter, Regine Lockot, who admit some continuities beyond the regime change in 1933, and pushes their arguments further.[2] In Rickels' view, it is necessary to reintroduce Nazi psychoanalysis "full-time" into the historical record (v. 1, p. 38). This review will discuss the first two installments of this thought-provoking, three-volume dialogue with the histories and theories of psychoanalysis, technology, and culture.

Drawing from a wide range of scientific, literary and filmic sources, volume one follows the spread of psychoanalysis into the various fields of psychological interventionism through and beyond WWI. What emerges is an ambivalent success story: owing to the prestige psychoanalysis earned through its therapeutic efficacy in the treatment of shell-shock and other war-induced neuroses during and after the Great War, Freud's intrapsychic model made inroads even into hitherto hostile, more medically-oriented sciences such as psychology. Key to this process of recognition and assimilation was the acceptance of psychoanalysis by the military complex as treatment of choice for war-neurotic soldiers. Rickels rejects the assumption that by 1933 psychoanalysis was so altered from within that it became compatible with the new order. In his view, the Nazis kept psychoanalysis for pragmatic reasons, namely "because it worked" (v. 1, p. 13). To be sure, Rickels concedes:

"Yes, it makes a difference if you can't, even if it's only in public, published contexts, use the analytic vocabulary.... But in the big picture, Nazi Germany was a pop-psychological culture of all-out healing that followed the intrapsychic model even into regions that had been declared off-limits, set aside for management by sociology alone. By the 1940's the military-psychological complex worldwide was following the lead taken by the German colleagues through Freud's analysis of group psychology" (v. 1, p. 55).

In fact, according to Rickels, this move was so global that the U.S. WWII effort had to take from the Nazis the fact that Freud's post-WWI reflections on group psychol-

ogy should be sent to the new war front (v. 2, p. 278). Psychoanalysis had become the international standard.

The second volume traces the advances in psychoanalysis made during WWII. The focus is on the psychotechno developments of the aircraft pilot ("the first cyborg"), and on the adjustments, in theory and therapy, that were made by civilian populations under total air war conditions. In the wake of German air strikes on British cities, Rickels observes, the effects of war on civilian women and children were examined for the first time. The new insights led to the development of family systems therapy, which remains a treatment option among psychiatrists today. [3]

While Rickels does not argue the political affinity of Nazism and psychoanalysis, he demonstrates their cohabitation and juxtaposition not least in the treatment of homosexuality. According to Rickels, homosexuality belonged to an interdisciplinary field of intervention over which the proponents of sterilization, castration, or elimination competed with psychotherapists for best results. In diagnosing the majority of homosexuals to be "kernel neurotics," analysts such as J. H. Schultz, the German inventor of autogenic training, meant to restore human resources to the community's gene pool (v. 2, p. 209). "The racism of the Nazi community," Rickels writes, "helped Aryan homosexuals out: if the genes were right, then how could there be a tight fit with racial inferiority? Neurosis existed–precisely because it could be cured" (v. 2, p. 205).

At the crossroads of cure and elimination, a historical reader might note the missed encounter between Rickels and Detlev Peukert who situates the genesis of the "Final Solution" with the spirit of science.[4] A similar point could be made with regard to Peter Fritzsche's study of German aviation in the first three decades of the twentieth century.[5] Consideration of such works would have added historic specificity to Rickels' concern with the Nazi culture of both total healing and airmindedness. In fact, the efficacy of the books reviewed here is somewhat constrained by the fact that Rickels ends his limited engagement with the historical literature in 1995.

Historians who prefer systematic interpretive argument might find this work difficult to read. *Nazi Psychoanalysis* is a performative text that undercuts the reader's desire for closure. The lucid foreword by Benjamin Bennett provides a helpful introduction to the trajectories of what even this sympathetic reader considers a difficult style. Rickels' writing is heavy with quotations. Clinical terms remain largely undefined. There are no footnotes. Allusions and wordplays further push the envelope of academic style. A few lapses might not qualify as slips in precision. *Erlebnisstruktur*, for example, reappears as "experimental" rather than "experiential structure" (v. 2, p. 300). Some readers might find it difficult to follow when Rickels asks them to hear the "parent" in "apparently" (v. 1, p. 142). Others will have their consciences tormented by the phrase "before push comes to ovens" which surfaces in a segment on concentration camps (v. 1, p. 212). But then, haunting is one of Rickels' specialties. The texts are populated with occult figures of "unmourning" such as vampires and mummies. This writing is not meant to be mastered in a purely rational sense. According to Rickels, "Mourning is the model of this work. It's work, all work, that takes the time–the times–it takes to mourn. It's time to be user-unfriendly" (v. 1, p. xvi).

Notes

[1]. James E. Goggin and Eileen Brockman Goggin, *Death of a "Jewish Science": Psychoanalysis in the Third Reich* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001).

[2]. Ulfried Geuter, *Die Professionalisierung der deutschen Psychology im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984); Regine Lockot, *Erinnern und Durcharbeiten: Zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse und Psychotherapie im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985); Geoffrey Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich: The Goering Institute* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985; revised edition 1997). Rickels, who ended his discussion of the literature when he concluded research on the books in 1995, in a rather polemical tone seems to address Cocks when noting: "If a certain first-generation historian of Nazi German psychotherapy ... has since 1995 published an 'expanded' new edition of his work that suddenly takes another look at the materials by the stolen fire of my work (admittedly reduced to night-light by the shame of it), then I can only make the referral to Karl Kraus, who had all there is to say about the double failure in journalism and prostitution that leaves the loser only one option by default–the small-change careerism of the academic historian" (v. 1, p. xix f.; v. 2, p. xxii).

[3]. See Bill Schlotter (review), *93106*, v. 13, no. 6 (November 18, 2002).

[4]. Detlev J. K. Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945*, ed. David F. Crew (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 274-299. The German origi-

nal was published as "Die Genesis der 'Endloesung' aus dem Geist der Wissenschaft," in *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne*, ed. Detlev Peukert (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 102-21.

[5]. Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

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