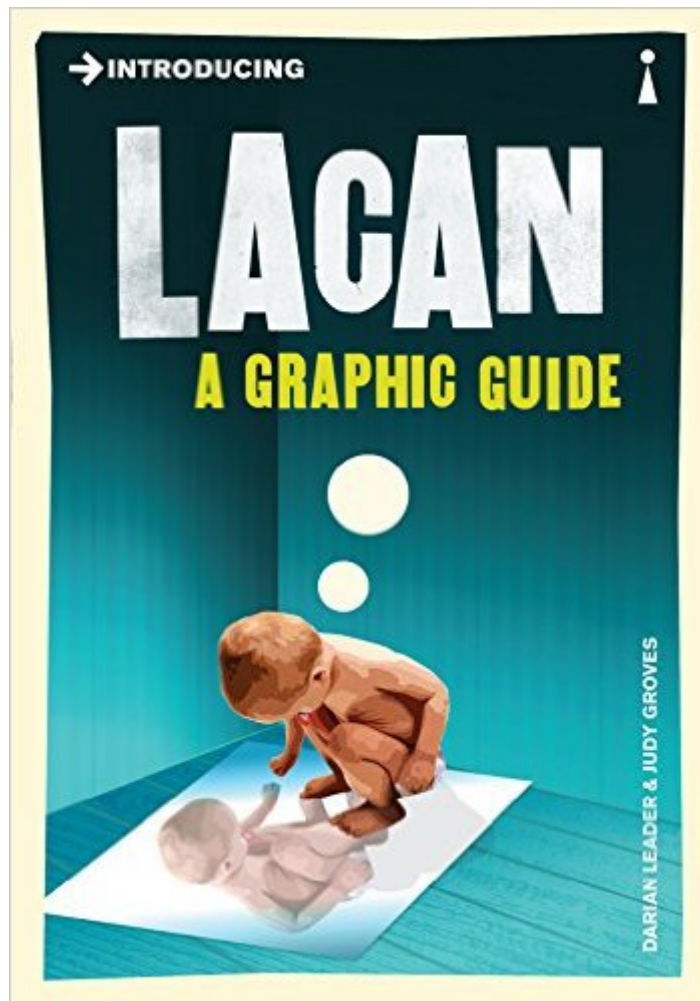


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Introducing Lacan: A Graphic Guide (Introducing...)



Synopsis

Jacques Lacan is now regarded as a major psychoanalytical theorist alongside Freud and Jung, although recognition has been delayed by fierce arguments over his ideas. Written by a leading Lacanian analyst, "Introducing Lacan" guides the reader through his innovations, including his work on paranoia, his addition of structural linguistics to Freudianism and his ideas on the infant 'mirror phase'. It also traces Lacan's influence in postmodern critical thinking on art, literature, philosophy and feminism. This is the ideal introduction for anyone intrigued by Lacan's ideas but discouraged by the complexity of his writings.

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Customer Reviews

Like many, I have struggled with Lacan's "own" words in English translation, sensing ideas of importance that are lost because a) Lacan intentionally obfuscated his ideas to make the very points he wrote about, b) French linguistic play doesn't translate into English, & c) translators vary in quality, in part depending on their audience (e.g., cultural studies, which often misconstrues Lacan as a postmodernist). This book is a wonderful introduction, although I suspect it is of greatest value

to someone like myself who has already attempted to fathom Schema L with frustration. For the beginner, I suggest making a try at Lacan himself especially the Seminars, for example, Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. After enduring one or two of these, come to this book, and then return to Lacan, who should now seem much more illuminating and witty. You may even understand why Lacan seemed so frustrating to you, which goes to his essential points about what language does for the sense of self. Another strategy is to read any number of works by Slavoj Žižek (for example, *Looking Awry*, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Hitchcock*), who can slice and dice popular culture in a fun way, all the while with a very lucid understanding of Lacan's ideas. It helps to have one or two videos of Hitchcock handy as you do so.

When you need an introduction to Lacan, buy this and forget the rest. This book has at least three merits. First, the author is an orthodox lacanian psychoanalyst. This advantage could not be overstated. So many books titled so-called "Introduction to Lacan" are written by non-professional (e.g. professors of French, Cultural Studies or literary critic) with some dubious leanings and irredeemable confusions. Those books are rather personal accounts than good introductions for beginner and of no use to understand one of the most difficult writers of all time. Darian Leader's book is different. This book was written by lacanian professional rather than self-appointed "interpreter" of Lacan and supervised by Jacques-Alain Miller, the successor of Lacan. This fact makes the book the most faithful and reliable introduction to Lacan. Second, this book explains the clinical significance and origin of great Lacanian terms, e.g. repetition, *sinthome*, *lalangue*, so on. The result is that the approach makes it easy to understand. This is why other books by non-psychiatrist could be by no means competitors. Third, this book is written by exceptionally clear language and aided by intelligent graphics. Clarity is not a Lacanian virtue, but this book makes an immensely satisfying exception.

I'm puzzled at the other reviews; this really is the best place to start with Lacan. It is the Third intro to him I've read. The first was Žižek, which was very interesting, but he explains Lacan in more cultural terms, as Lacan relates to popular culture. Then I read Sean Homer's book, and I was a bit disappointed, in trying to simplify he left me feeling like I hadn't gotten enough info to understand really what Lacan meant with certain terms. This book I loved. Yes, it is simple, but extremely clear. Many of the terms I had previously read about 'clicked' with me the way they were presented in this book. Usually I don't write reviews, I would never have bought this, it was given to me, but I am so glad I read it. InsectDesires.com Psychodynamic art.

The "Graphic Guide" captures many of Lacan's basic ideas with creative pictorial imaginations. I have published on Lacan myself and know very well many other introductions. You can not compare those with a Graphic Guide. That seems quite obvious to me. Therefore taking into account what a "graphic guide" can do I was astonished about the many insights this little book can convey. I know other books of Darian Leader and I think with this book he did a very good job again.

I found this book to be an excellent introduction to Lacan, I especially appreciated Darian Leader's explanation of Lacan's graph of desire. Of course no introductory text book can fully cover a theory as complex as Lacanian psychoanalysis. But this text does come fairly close to doing this. And when combined with a reading of Lionell Bailly's excellent introductory text 'Lacan' and Bruce Fink's 'A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis' it contributes towards an excellent coverage of Lacan's work. I mention these other two texts as complementary reading to this text because there are so many introductory Lacanian texts which are either far too complex or are written in such a convoluted (and pretentious) manner to make their reading practically impossible.

This should probably be read in conjunction with Philip Hill's Lacan for Beginners, the latter of which takes a more linear, deterministic approach the likes of which Leader, in accordance with his readings of Lacan, tends to repudiate. That being said, it distills the seminars, which one should also be advised to read, into a nice exposition. The layman--and I sort of am one--should keep in mind that academics at some of the country's best universities have spent years studying these theories and still find them difficult to comprehend; one can conceivably spend years writing a Ph.D. dissertation on said theorist...the upshot of all of this being that one shouldn't get discouraged if even the ostensibly "lowly" comic book is perplexing.

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